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THE WANDERING JEW

A PLAY IN FOUR PHASES

BY

E. TEMPLE THURSTON

LONDON AND NEW YORK

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

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TO

MR. AND MRS. MATHESON LANG

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THIS dedication is the only tangible fashion in which I can express my gratitude to both of you for your enthusiasm and belief in this play. Without that belief, without that enthusiasm, I am convinced the manuscript would still be lying on my shelves and, for aught I know to the contrary, I might have been still more the loser in not possessing two very good friends.

E. T. T.

GODDARDS GREEN.
23–8–20.

THE WANDERING JEW

BY

E. TEMPLE THURSTON

CAST OF CHARACTERS

in the Order of their Appearance

Judith	HUTIN BRITTON
Rachel (Matathias' Sister)	MARGARET DAMER
Matathias, the Jew	MATHESON LANG
Du Guesclin	WOLFERSTAN BECK
Boemond, Prince of Tarentum	SHAYLE GARDNER
Godfrey, Duke of Normandy	R. CAMPBELL-FLETCHER
Raymond of Toulouse	GEORGE SKILLAN
Issachar, an old Jew	ERNEST BODKIN
Joanne de Beaudricourt	LILLAH MCCARTHY
The Unknown Knight	MATHESON LANG
Phirous, a Man-at-Arms	GEORGE MORGAN
Mario, a Servant	HORTON COOPER
Andrea Michelotti, a Merchant of Messina	W. F. GRANT
Matteos Battadios, the Jew	MATHESON LANG
Gianella Battadios, his Wife	ETHEL CARRINGTON
Pietro Morelli, a Padre	GEORGE SKILLAN

Al Kazar, a Moorish Servant .	DONALD R. YOUNG
Lazzaro Zapportas, a Jewish Merchant	HECTOR ABBAS
Maria Zapportas, his Wife . .	NONA WYNNE
Arnaldo Zapportas, his Son .	FREDDIE PIESLEY
Matteos Battadios, the Jew .	MATHESON LANG
Olalla Quintana, a Harlot.	DOROTHY HOLMES-GORE
Gonzalez Ferera } *Officials of the*	SHAYLE GARDNER
Alonzo Castro } *Inquisition*	ERNEST BODKIN

Juan de Texeda, Inquisitor-General .	W. F. GRANT
Alonzo Castro, the Confessor .	ERNEST BODKIN
Gonzalez Ferera, the Fiscal .	SHAYLE GARDNER
Councillor	HORTON COOPER
Councillor	WOLFERSTAN BECK
Officers of the Inquisition . {	R. CAMPBELL-FLETCHER WALTER MENPES
A Man-at-Arms . . .	WALTER PLINGE

Lords, Ladies, Knights, Men-at-Arms, Squires, Heralds, Soldiers, Councillors, etc.

The Play produced by MATHESON LANG *and* A. W. TYRER. *Theatre Royal, Manchester, Aug.* 23, 1920; *New Theatre, London, Sept.* 9, 1920.

(*During the playing of the music of the introduction the lights are lowered all through the theatre, and in the darkness that follows the voice of the* CRIER *is heard.*)

THE CRIER

To each his destiny—to each his Fate. We all are wanderers in a foreign land between the furrow and the stars.

PHASE I

CHARACTERS

MATATHIAS	The Jew
RACHEL	His Sister
JUDITH.	

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PHASE I

Scene

The room of a house in Jerusalem. Up S.R. is a bed upon which Judith *lies dying. Up stage, in centre of a wall, an archway leads out directly into the street. To S.L. of archway there is a long window high up in the wall, with a long, low table below it. In wall S.L. there is another archway leading into a farther room, covered by an oriental curtain. There are oriental mats on the floor.*

As curtain rises, the young woman, Rachel, *is seen looking out of archway up S.C.* Judith *lies inert and apparently lifeless on the bed. After a moment she raises herself with difficulty on her elbow.*

JUDITH

(*In the faint voice of one near death.*) Water! Bring me water! (*She falls back again on the pillows.* Rachel *comes quickly to where a pitcher of water and a bowl are standing in a corner of the room. She fills the bowl.*)

RACHEL

(*Bringing a bowl of water to* Judith.) Does the fever burn again?

JUDITH

(*Drinking the water.*) So fiercely that my eyes seem swollen in my head and all I look at turns to flame.

RACHEL

(*Taking the bowl from her, dipping her hand into the water, and laying it on* JUDITH'S *forehead.*) If life were only dearer to you, you would soon be well. What is this ailing in your mind that thwarts recovery?

JUDITH

How see you that?

RACHEL

The trouble in your eyes, which more than fever brings. You look about you as you were pursued. You search for things that are not here. But yesterday in a delirium, when Matathias was away, you cried a name so loudly and in such agony of voice that tears came to my eyes at the pain of it.

JUDITH.

(*With agitation.*) What name?

RACHEL

'Levi' you called, and again 'Levi—Levi,' until it seemed there must be one to answer and yet no voice replied.

JUDITH

Sooner would I have breathed no more than say that name.

RACHEL

Who is this Levi?

JUDITH

My child—my little son. Ask me no more or I shall speak of things my lips are sealed upon.

RACHEL

They better spoken were than left to burn like poison in the blood. Set free your mind of these disturbances; 'twill cool the fever in your head and bring you ease of it. (*She takes* JUDITH'S *hand.*) I am all patience and sympathy to hear.

JUDITH

How can I speak to Matathias' sister what I would not dare to say to him?

RACHEL

And yet when he did send for me to stay beside your bed, he told me much that you think hidden from me now. 'She has a husband and a child in Bethel in the mountains,' he told me. 'She fled from there and entered my house one night, and is a wife to me this day.'

JUDITH

Oh God! That night! And now this day!

RACHEL

Then is your love for Matathias dead?

JUDITH

Not dead—I love him still and fear him more, but there is that within my conscience and my soul that cries out for my child whom I have left. This sickness of my body is of my spirit too. I lie through the long night and only pray that death may bring me ease of it.

RACHEL

Does Matathias know of this?

JUDITH

Once I did speak to him when first this fever brought me to my bed.

RACHEL

And then?

JUDITH

He is your brother and you know the temper of the man—fierce to love as fierce to hate. As fiercely as he loves me so fiercely does he hate my son and him for whom I bore him. 'Let me return but once,' I said, 'but once, to see my child, and then I will come back to you,' at which, taking the knife he carries in his girdle, he swore that he would kill me sooner—saying 'twas but a trick to leave him. And when I protested, vowing I loved him still, he took me once more in his arms and spoke as to a child with that great gentleness that won me to him first.

RACHEL

He burns with jealousy, and when a boy was like a firebrand, ready to be caught in flame by any spark

that flew. Does he not know then that your heart is torn in this distress?

JUDITH

He knows or has forgotten, for never does he speak of it. (*Lying back in exhaustion on her pillows.*) Oh, how far off everything does seem. I feel like a feather balanced on the world.

RACHEL

I will bring your draught of herbs. [*She rises.*

JUDITH

No draught can cure these pains. Look out again and see if he returns.

[RACHEL *goes to the archway up S.C. and looks out.*

RACHEL

I see him not.

[*She comes down again and exits by door S.L.*

JUDITH

(*Raising her arms above her head.*) Levi! Levi!

Enter RACHEL *with draught in bowl.*

RACHEL

He has been two hours gone on this mad errand to the Nazarene.

[*She comes over to the bedside and gives* JUDITH *the draught.*

JUDITH

(*Giving back the bowl.*) Why call you his errand mad?

RACHEL

Why? The Nazarene Himself is mad! Last night they took Him in the garden which is by the brook Cedron, where He was betrayed by one of those who follow Him. They brought Him to Annas and then to Caiaphas the High Priest.

JUDITH

What wrong has He done? He has healed the sick and fed the poor. Did He not raise one from the dead? What wrong has He done that brings a need of judgment? [*She sits up in bed.*

RACHEL

Nay, talk no more. Lie back again and close your eyes. One hour of sleep might quench the fever.

JUDITH

No sleep for me till Matathias shall come back. 'Twas I who prayed him go and bring the Nazarene to make me well. He laughed and like you said the man was mad. Why is He mad and what harm has He done?

RACHEL

Whilst you have been abed here in this room, scarce day has passed without some riot or disturbance. He is perverting the nation; sowing sedition throughout all the land. He calls Himself Christ and says He is

a King; has sworn He will destroy the Temple and in three days will build it up again. What else but madness can this be?

JUDITH

Supposing it were true?

RACHEL

What true?

JUDITH

That He were the Christ and were indeed a King.

RACHEL

Aye—and true perhaps He were the Son of God!

JUDITH

Does He say that?

RACHEL

There is no madness that He will not say.

JUDITH

(*To herself.*) The Son of God. (*To* RACHEL.) Have you seen Him? Have you heard Him in the Temple?

RACHEL

Nay—nor have I wish of it.

JUDITH

Five days ago I saw Him—that day the fever brought me to my bed. (*She speaks in a tone of awe.*) 'Twas

as He came from Bethphage into the city, seated upon an ass with a little colt following at its heels. There were crowds about Him, spreading their garments in His way and cutting branches from the trees to make a path for Him. And with Him came those twelve disciples, rough fishermen, who hang upon the words He says. 'Hosanna,' they were crying—'Hosanna to the Son of David,' and I stayed to watch them as they went. 'Twas then I saw Him close, for as He passed He looked into my eyes and then I felt in dread, for all that I had ever done, my child and husband I had left, all stood before Him then and He must see my heart's iniquity. But when I thought that anger would set light within His eyes, no anger burnt—only a divine gentleness, as though He took my soul in His and eased it of the burden that it bore.

RACHEL

He hath bewitched you as He hath bewitched them all.

JUDITH

Nay—I was not bewitched. All that I saw—I saw. He said no word to conjure me. But I have never known such rest as I saw in those eyes of His. Go—look again. Tell me if Matathias comes.

RACHEL

(*Going to archway again and looking out—after a moment.*) Great crowds are gathered by the Judgment Hall. (*At that moment a sound of music is heard—some weird oriental tune.*) This is that Nazarene again, stirring up the people at the Feast of Passover. I see him now. He runs—now stays to look behind.

JUDITH

Who plays that music ?

RACHEL

Some blind beggar on his pipe outside.

JUDITH

Then bid him stay his hand, I cannot bear the sound of it. My senses are all strung until I hear the message Matathias brings. (*As* RACHEL *goes to the archway.*) Was there no man with him as he came ?

RACHEL

(*Drawing curtain into street.*) None—he came alone.

JUDITH

Maybe the Nazarene will follow after.

RACHEL

Say no more you are not bewitched of Him. What power on earth can this man have beyond the power of other men ?

JUDITH

I only know the power I saw there in His eyes. Oh, give him a mite and stay that beggar's hand ! His music maddens me.

[*Exit* RACHEL *by arch, and a moment later enter* MATATHIAS. *He is out of breath with running, excitement, and anger.*

MATATHIAS

(*Coming quickly to the bed and kneeling down beside it.*) Dear love, I've been long gone from you. These hours have seemed a year. How feel you now? Are all the pains of fever gone?

[*The music outside stops and* RACHEL *enters, quickly drawing the curtain behind her.*

JUDITH

My strength is going, Matathias—life is a poor thing, trembling in me now. Only tell me—will He come to lay His hands on me?

MATATHIAS

That madman!

JUDITH

Nay—the Nazarene.

RACHEL

Have you seen Him?

MATATHIAS

(*Rising to his feet.*) This very morn they brought Him before Pilate in the Judgment Hall. Have I seen Him? God of our fathers! Have I not made myself a laughing-stock before all people? I spoke to Him as they brought Him from the court of Herod. I prayed Him come and lay His hands on Judith's head and heal her of her fever.

JUDITH

What did He say, Matathias? Say quickly all He said.

MATATHIAS

With those great eyes He looked at me, and with that voice a mother might reprove her child, He said—'Return the woman to her husband and she shall be healed.'

JUDITH

(*Sitting up in bed, her face full of wonder and of awe as* RACHEL *looks at her in the astonishment of first belief.*) Did He say that? Were those His very words?

MATATHIAS

'Twas all He said—and knowing you had fled from the man in Bethel, the people laughed at me and cried out it were a likely cure when he would beat you from his door.

JUDITH

(*Still awed.*) 'Twas not my husband but my child He meant. How did He know the very pulses of my heart?

RACHEL

(*Trying to recall her first convictions.*) Some busybody has been speaking of it in the market-place and it has reached His ears.

JUDITH

Nay, He would not listen, He, to wagging tongues. He saw it in my eyes that day at Bethphage.

MATATHIAS

And you pay heed to what this madman says?

JUDITH

He is no madman, Matathias, but a man of wonder —maybe a man of God.

MATATHIAS

Yet I would sooner see you dead than give you back to him at Bethel. This Nazarene is all puffed out with vanity and swollen with conceit because a few sick beggars and idle fishermen pour flattery in His ears; but justice has been found for Him this day. Before the sun sets we shall be rid of Him.

JUDITH

What do you say? (*She struggles to rise in bed.*)

MATATHIAS

Even now they are setting from the Judgment Hall, and ere an hour is gone He will be struggling on a cross on Calvary.

JUDITH

Crucified! (*The sound of the crowds can just be heard in the distance.*)

RACHEL

(*With forced self-conviction.*) A fitting end to all His blasphemy.

JUDITH

Oh, you know not, either of you, what you say! They kill the Son of God who crucify this man, and it will be a stain of sin that no blood ever shall wipe out.

MATATHIAS

Hath He bewitched you too then with His blasphemies? (*The murmur of the crowd is heard again.*) Hark! Even now the people come. (*Kneeling suddenly beside her bed.*) Oh, my Judith, pay no more heed to the folly of this trickster's words. This is your home—for Bethel was no home to you. Throw off the sickness of this fever and come back to me again as you have always been.

JUDITH

He knows the secrets in a mother's heart. 'Twas that He said. 'Twas thus He showed the truth that is in Him. Let me return or even bring my child to me.

MATATHIAS

Let you go back! What, be a flatterer to His mad conceit myself! How could such folly heal you? If that be truth, then I will shut my ears and hear no more. Nay, had He but come here to the house and laid His hand upon your eyes, and you had risen

straightway from the bed, I too, with all those fools, might have believed. But in my hour of misery to turn and mock me as He did! The truth! I cried as loud as all the rest: 'Crucify Him! Crucify Him!' and may He linger in His death as I am lingering in despair of you.

JUDITH

Can you believe then only what you see? Oh, Matathias, what have you done?

MATATHIAS

What have I done? Added my voice to that of all Jerusalem. When Pilate asked us whom he should release, it being the Feast of the Passover, I was the first to cry aloud, 'Barabbas!' He has not bewitched our women as this Jesus of Nazareth hath done. Oh, Judith, let not thy mind run more upon His mockery, but get thee well and fill my life again.

[RACHEL *climbs up on the table and looks out of the window as the sounds of the crowd come nearer and voices are heard crying out in the distance: 'Crucify Him! Crucify Him! Hail, King of the Jews!'*

JUDITH

I never shall be well again for this world now.

MATATHIAS

(*In despair and rising from the bed.*) Then curse this Nazarene!

JUDITH

I am content to die if I shall be with Him in Paradise.

MATATHIAS

But should my curses reach His soul, there never will He be this day. If He has healed others why cannot He heal you and save Himself.

JUDITH

My healing is of no account, and if it be the will of God He yet may save Himself.

RACHEL

The crowds come now—the soldiers and centurions. (*Leaning further out of the window.*) I see the cross sway to and fro amongst the heads of those that follow.

JUDITH

What have they done?

MATATHIAS

What have they done? They have declared in justice 'gainst this mountebank of God, and surely as He comes this way I will go out and spit on Him.

JUDITH

(*Reaching out of bed with difficulty to touch his arm.*) I pray you not. Oh, Matathias, if it be an evil thing to you that I should die, mayhap a still worse thing may then befall you.

MATATHIAS

Nay, that I swear to do—if you must die, I'll let the people see my rich contempt of Him.

JUDITH

May God defend you from a dreadful thing if you do this.

[*The crowds can be heard now passing under the window.*

RACHEL

(*Contemptuously.*) I see Him coming with His cross. He struggles 'neath the weight of it. (*Pause.*) A crown of thorns is on His head, and all the sweat and blood are trickling down His cheek. (*Half in wonder.*) He hath a woman's face this Nazarene; nay, yet a man's, though all the tenderness of women I can find there too.

MATATHIAS

God of Abraham! Here is another caught hold by His witcheries!

[*The spears of the soldiers can just be seen passing by.* JUDITH *is straining herself to rise up in bed; there is a wonderful look of expectation in her eyes.*

RACHEL

(*Putting up her hands to her eyes and turning away as the top of the cross is seen going unsteadily by the window,*

and with it from below moves a brilliant light that passes away with the crowd.) I am afraid.

[JUDITH *sits up in the bed following the light with her eyes that are filled with a wonderful fulfilment.*

MATATHIAS

(*Shading his eyes with his hands.*) What light was that ?

RACHEL

He has gone by.

JUDITH

It was the light of God, and you have shut your eyes upon it.

MATATHIAS

The light of God, you say ! I *will* not see the light of God in this impostor's eyes. The God of our fathers is of mightier stuff than this. He stood but now in the Judgment Hall and spake no word—was dumb in His defence. What manner of divinity is that ? I would not thank you for such manhood, and you talk to me of God !

JUDITH

I hear His silence deeper in my soul than any words which might have passed His lips.

MATATHIAS

How, with His silky tongue and woman's face, can He thus steal away the reason from your mind ? I

know the man—soft looks and drooping lids that ever caught a woman in a snare. I'll show Him forth and, as He hangs upon the cross, will make Him tell the people all He is as He drags out His miserable end.

JUDITH

(*With great effort sitting up in bed and imploring him.*) I do entreat you, Matathias, and you love me still, let me not die with such a shame upon my soul. (*She tries in her agony to hold him.*) For yours will be the blasphemy to say such things, and I shall go down to my grave in sorrow and disgrace.

RACHEL

(*Looking from the window.*) He bears the cross no more; the weight of it hath broken Him. Some other hath it on his shoulders now, as they set up the hill.

MATATHIAS

(*Laughing.*) Your man of God! How will He bear the pains of death who cannot bear such pains as these? (*As he frees himself from* JUDITH.) This man would build the Temple in three days who cannot bear a cross! Your man of God! He is not fit to spit upon! (*He goes to the door.*)

JUDITH

Matathias! Stay, Matathias!

[*He goes out swiftly, drawing the curtain after him.*

JUDITH

Tell me he has not gone. Look out; say twas an idle boast of his.

RACHEL

(*Looking out.*) I see him running up the street.

JUDITH

Which way? Which way?

RACHEL

The way they all have gone. He now who bears the cross is bent already 'neath the weight of it.

JUDITH

But Matathias—what of Matathias?

RACHEL

He pushes his way through the crowd.

JUDITH

And now?

RACHEL

He lays his hand on the Nazarene's shoulder. He turns. I see that face again.

JUDITH

Now? Now? What now?

RACHEL

Now Matathias spits on Him.

JUDITH

Oh God! That this should be!

RACHEL

The Nazarene is speaking and Matathias listens like one who is struck dumb.

JUDITH

The evil thing is done. (*She sits up in the bed again in a sudden spasm, struggling for her breath to speak; then she falls back dead on the pillows.*)

RACHEL

(*Still looking out of the window.*) He has fallen back out of the crowd. He comes back now—back to the house—but he trembles as he walks. His face is white as the ashes of a fire. Here now he is—here—now.

The door opens. Enter MATATHIAS.

RACHEL

(*Getting down from table.*) What hath He said?

MATATHIAS

(*Dazed still at what he has heard.*) He looked at me—His eyes!—and then—and then He said: 'I will not wait for thee, but thou shalt wait for Me until I come to thee again.' What does He mean? What does He mean? It is a curse—a curse as I cursed Him. But who am I and who is He? our curses are but words as empty as that pitcher on the floor. Yet I tremble at the thought: for when should that man ever come to me again? (*Turning to the bed.*) Judith, if you must die, then—— (*He finds that she is lying still, and, going quickly on his knees, he takes her in his arms.*)

Is she asleep? (*He tries to wake her.*) Judith, Judith, awake—open your eyes and look at me! Oh, she is dead; so I must lose the greatest thing of all. She's dead, and life is hollow as an empty gourd. Now might I well die, too; and she and I and the Nazarene will be fit company to Paradise. Judith, my love—(*he kisses her*)—I shall be with you now. (*He takes out a knife from his girdle and plunges it into his breast. It breaks and the pieces fall to the floor. With a cry of horror he picks up the pointed end and plunges it again in his breast. It breaks again. He stands a moment looking at it.*) (*With a hollow laugh of terror.*) What is this trick that keeps death from my hand? (*In an awed whisper.*) The curse. It has begun.

[*The stage begins to darken with the approach of the coming storm. As a distant roar of thunder is heard,* RACHEL *cowers up against the wall, trembling.*

CURTAIN

PHASE II

CHARACTERS

Boemond	Prince of Tarentum.
Godfrey	Duke of Normandy.
Raymond of Toulouse.	
Issachar	A Jew.
Joanne de Beaudricourt.	
The Unknown Knight.	
Phirous	A Man at-Arms.

Yeomen, Ladies, Knights, Men-at-Arms, etc.

SCENE I

PERIOD: FIRST CRUSADE

SCENE

The lists near Antioch.

The temporarily erected gallery enclosing the lists, covered with its brightly coloured awning and draped with tapestries hiding its framework, stretches from entrance left to right up S. raised but slightly from S.R. to S.C., and then rising tier upon tier, coming down at an angle to S.L. Between the bottom of the awning and the heads of the people, looking across the lists, can be seen the brilliant blue Eastern sky, with a group of Cyprus trees in the distance.

The lighting effect of this scene is that of subdued shadow under the awning, strikingly contrasted with the brilliant sunshine in the lists beyond, which just strikes in under the canopy on to the colours of the dresses, etc., in the front row.

The crowd of onlookers is so raised as to obscure the sight of the horses, only showing the heads and shoulders of the knights in armour as they ride by.

There is a flight of steps down from the raised platform at the back, allowing characters to descend on to the grass, which, in the shadow of the awning, makes the foreground of the scene.

When the curtain rises the sound of trumpets is heard, and the spectators lean forward eagerly in their seats as one of the knights in full armour with his lance in rest is seen above the heads of the people, dashing by with the thunder of his horse's hoofs and the clash of armour as he meets his opponent in the centre of the lists, off S.R.

Some definite result of the encounter is evidently achieved, for the people wave handkerchiefs and scream and shout with excitement, crying 'Brave lance!' to the victorious knight as he rides back down the lists with his broken lance held up, lowering it as he passes the gallery where the throne of the Prince of Tarentum is set and all the highest ladies and knights are gathered.

As he passes, music is heard in the distance—a wild, barbaric Eastern effect, combined largely of cymbals and bells. It has in its composition a suggestion of the music heard in the previous Act.

[*After the knight has passed and the shouting has died down,* BEOMOND, Prince of Tarentum, *followed by* GODFREY, Duke of Normandy, *and* RAYMOND of Toulouse, *come down the steps from the gallery on to the grass in the foreground.*

BOEMOND

If he shall unhorse the Sieur du Guesclin the day is his, and we shall be beholden to him for the courtesy of putting to shame the best of all these knights that ride beneath our standard.

GODFREY

He will not vanquish du Guesclin.

RAYMOND

I would not trust the issue to my hopes. He sports with danger, and I have heard him make a jest of death.

BOEMOND

He might well sport with death in service of my arms; but serving none, and covering his face that none may read his looks, it likes me ill to see him sweep my knights from out their saddles as they were so much chaff to sweep from off the floor. How can we steal this mask he wears? Who are his men-at-arms?

RAYMOND

One fellow does attend to him—no more.

BOEMOND

Where is his tent?

GODFREY

Out there upon the plain. It stands all set apart —aloof and like himself.

BOEMOND

Might we not put a watch on it and catch him unawares?

RAYMOND

My lord Prince! We are all knights and may not put our chivalry to shame! It is the hospitality of this tournament to invite all comers, whosoe'er they be, asking no credit but of their valour and their chivalry. Of these two qualities this unknown knight has shown as high degree as any in the lists.

BOEMOND

The more then would I know his name that I might gather him beneath my standard.

GODFREY

Ask of the Jew. He's travelled far and knows a many of the secrets of the East. Ask of the Jew. We've bled him dry of all but these.

BOEMOND

He is not dry, my lord Duke. Each time we squeeze him, sure he cries for mercy, but he weeps a ducat more. Bring him to me. We'll question him.

[*Exit* GODFREY, Duke of Normandy, *by wings at S.L.*

RAYMOND

I did myself speak with his man-at-arms.

BOEMOND

What did the fellow say ?

RAYMOND

He seemed as honest as a fool can be. 'Twas no disguise that he professed, but turned on me an eye as liquid clear in all its innocence as drops of water in the hollow of the hand.

BOEMOND

But what said he ? The eye gives natural service to a fool. The tongue may fail him.

RAYMOND

His words were just as simple as his glance. He knew no more than I, he said. His master chose to follow at the heels of war. He knew not whence he came, nor whither he had made his mind to go. No cause he served—nor Turk nor Christian—yet held his life as cheap as any bauble on a woman's wrist.

BOEMOND

How long had the fellow served with him ?

RAYMOND

Two years, no more.

BOEMOND

Whence comes the servant ?

RAYMOND

He is of Salamis—in Kupros—a hardy man of simple wit, just such a servitor as he must need who would keep counsel with himself.

BOEMOND

And in two years he's learnt no more than this ?

RAYMOND

One other matter the knight could not conceal, not even from a fool.

BOEMOND

Let's hear it all.

RAYMOND

As daring as he is in deeds of valour, so is he venturous in love. No woman resists him. He does take favours from all that please his eye, and fears as little of damnation to his soul as it would seem he fears of danger to his life.

BOEMOND

I could be well worse served by other qualities than those. A man can live but once, and he who drinks from brim to bottom of the measure finds heart for enterprise. Here comes the Jew; now watch me bait him first.

[*Enter* GODFREY, Duke of Normandy, *with* ISSACHAR, *an old Jew about seventy years of age. He bows with servile humility before* BOEMOND.

BOEMOND

Issachar, a more ten thousand crowns!

ISSACHAR

My lord! My lord! I've not ten groats to call my own! You've had my little fortune to its dregs.

BOEMOND

Let's have them, then, maybe they'll weigh as heavy as the draught.

ISSACHAR

My lord! I have no more! I pray o' nights for death, that it may be my merciful extortioner.

RAYMOND

There's more than death, Jew. My lord the Bishop of Marseilles has made as pretty a design of torture as I have ever seen. It gives the sweetest pain and wrings out secrets as daintily as a mistress wrings the tears from out her kerchief.

[*They laugh at his distress.*

ISSACHAR

I am an old man. I cannot bear the torture, my lord!

BOEMOND

How then will you pay for ease of it?

ISSACHAR

I have a son, my lord, in Mitylene. If I should send to him, maybe he'd scrape ten thousand crowns to save me this.

BOEMOND

(*Laughing as the others laugh with him.*) Brave Jew! I was but baiting you. (*To* GODFREY.) Nevertheless, remember that, my lord. There are ten thousand crowns in Mitylene. (*To* ISSACHAR.) It was not money that I called you for. We need to know who is this stranger knight who jousts to-day.

ISSACHAR

I know no more than you, my lord. How was he entered for the tournay?

GODFREY

Le Sieur Inconnu.

ISSACHAR

What's the device upon his shield?

RAYMOND

'Tis hard to tell; but I have seen it close. It is a dagger broke in three.

BOEMOND

That tells no tale. But I have heard that you, Jew, in your wanderings in the East of Europe, have not a little knowledge of the men who come and go. So venturesome a knight as this could scarce have passed unheard by ears as sharp as yours. Is there no man of your knowing he might be?

ISSACHAR

(*After a pause.*) None, my lord.

RAYMOND

The lady Joanne, wife of the Sieur de Beaudricourt, had speech with him but yesterday, my lord, after the jousting was done.

BOEMOND

To what purpose?

RAYMOND

I do not know, my lord.

GODFREY

Where was de Beaudricourt ?

BOEMOND

(*Sarcastically.*) In any place but that which she might need him. That knight will rot his bones in France if caution is enough to bring them home again.

GODFREY

Question her, my lord. (*Indicating the gallery.*) She sits up there.

BOEMOND

Bring her down. I'll sift this matter to what end I can.

GODFREY, Duke of Normandy, *departs up the steps to the gallery.*

ISSACHAR

I have been thinking wide and deep, my lord, and there's no man but one I know of whom this knight might be.

BOEMOND

Who's that ?

ISSACHAR

(*Shaking his head as he ponders over his thoughts.*) But 'tis not like to be. Nay, surely 'tis not like.

BOEMOND

Well, speak it out and let us judge of that.

ISSACHAR

There is a man, my lord, a member of our wandering race, whose name's a whisper round the fires o' nights. In Kupros I have heard of him—in Candia, too, and I have spoke with those who heard his name in other cities and in other tongues.

[*As they begin to listen intently to the note of mystery in his voice,* JOANNE DE BEAUDRICOURT *descends the steps from the gallery, followed by* GODFREY, Duke of Normandy. *They distract their attention for a moment as they bow to her. She bows before* BOEMOND.

JOANNE

You sent for me, my lord?

BOEMOND

I did, and will inform you of my purpose; but let this Jew progress. He tells a tale that does invite my curiosity. Now, Jew, this man——

ISSACHAR

'Tis he, my lord, they call the Wandering Jew.

RAYMOND

I've heard of him—a myth—surely there is no substance in the tale.

BOEMOND

What tale?

ISSACHAR

'Tis said, my lord, that as your Christ did carry up His cross to Calvary, this man, a citizen of Jerusalem, spat in His face because of some spite he bore, and that the Nazarene did bid him walk the earth until He came to him again. So for these thousand years and more he toils the ways of life, a man such as he was, without an added year upon his head, wandering and waiting for that Christ who—saving your presence—died on Calvary, and in that sepulchre you fight for, lies buried with the dust.

RAYMOND

(*Half drawing his sword.*) For that blasphemy, Jew, your throat may slit!

BOEMOND

Put back your weapon! He would not be a Jew without such faith, and we might be ill put to it without our Jew. Count those ten thousand crowns in Mitylene.

JOANNE

Of whom do you speak, my lord?

BOEMOND

Of this strange knight who plucks the honours of our lists to-day.

JOANNE

(*With a lively interest.*) But what, my lord, has that to do with the man the Jew speaks of?

ISSACHAR

Might he not be the same, fair lady? He does appear in any place—in any guise.

JOANNE

The same! Nay, God forbid!

BOEMOND

For all we know of him—why not?

GODFREY

Yesterday he held you in converse as we left the lists.

RAYMOND

How did he speak?

JOANNE

As any ordinary man, save that his voice was——
(*She hesitates, finding need for caution.*)

BOEMOND

His voice was what?

JOANNE

A fuller, nobler voice, my lord. A voice that had the note of things eternal—a voice that sure could not revile.

BOEMOND

(*Watching her closely.*) Of what eternal things then did he speak with all the sweat of jousting on his brow?

JOANNE

(*Confused.*) My lord—it—it was not what he said. He spoke no more than of the fortune of the lists. It was the temper of his voice I heard.

RAYMOND

What is he like to look on ?

JOANNE

I do not know.

BOEMOND

He did not raise his vizor as he talked with you ?

JOANNE

No, my lord Prince.

[*The trumpets sound in the lists for the last encounter of the tournament. The challenge is answered by trumpets in another direction. The voices of the heralds can be heard crying out the terms of the tournay, and the voices of the people begin to be heard again, eager and excited.*

RAYMOND

There sounds his final challenge to du Guesclin.

BOEMOND

Lady, will you not watch the hazard of eternal things ?

JOANNE

I rather would wait here; the sun strikes hot beneath that canopy, with your pardon, my lord.

BOEMOND

As you will it.

RAYMOND

I'd not forego it for the heat of hell.

[*Exit* BOEMOND, RAYMOND *and* GODFREY.

[JOANNE *still stands down S.C., her hands clasped in the strain of control.* ISSACHAR *is standing at S.R. watching her.*

JOANNE

(*Turning and, with a cautious glance at the gallery, coming towards him.*) Can there be such a man as he you speak of, Jew?

ISSACHAR

(*Bowing with servility.*) Lady, I have but heard of him. He comes and goes about the world, and last was seen a more than fifty years ago in Mitylene, where I have a son.

JOANNE

How does he come? Where does he go?

ISSACHAR

He comes as one would push his way into a crowd, and when his name is whispered round about, as though

it were the echo of his curse, he goes and none know whither.

[*The final trumpet sounds in the lists.* JOANNE *looks towards the sound in apprehensive emotion.*

JOANNE

There sounds the last challenge. Get you to the people there and watch above their heads. The Sieur du Guesclin sets his heart on victory.

[ISSACHAR *hurries to the palisade which encloses the people and men-at-arms, climbing up so that he can look over their heads. As he does so, the roar of the horses' hoofs draws nearer, and then the* UNKNOWN KNIGHT, *in full armour as before, thunders by. As he passes out of sight to S.R.* JOANNE *creeps up S. so that she is beside* ISSACHAR, *who is craning forward to see the issue. The crashing sound of armour can be heard again in the distance as they meet.*

JOANNE

(*Shuddering at the sound of it.*) Who falls?

[*The people, who have been watching in absolute silence, now send up a great shout.*

ISSACHAR

(*Half looking round.*) Du Guesclin falls.

[JOANNE *clasps her hands with momentary relief.* ISSACHAR *looks again.*

ISSACHAR

The strange knight has dismounted in the closing of an eye.

JOANNE

Aye, aye! they fight with swords. 'Tis to the death. What now?

ISSACHAR

(*After a pause, craning still further forward, then stepping down.*) Du Guesclin could not rise and he has spared his life.

JOANNE

Ah, there was a Christian deed! That was a knightly thing to do! See! He rides back.

[*The strange* KNIGHT *passes as before.*

JOANNE

Hark how the people cheer him for his chivalry! Let there be no more talk, Jew, of revilers on your lips. Get back amongst the people and if they ask you who he is, tell them a Christian knight, who keeps his heart for chivalry.

[ISSACHAR *bows himself out of her presence. The people up S. can be seen now standing up as they move out of their seats. There is much noise and laughter and waving of scarves, and then the sound of music, as before, rises above it all.* JOANNE

comes down S. still clasping her hands in joy at the issue of the tournament. Standing a moment in contemplation, she turns quickly with a sudden thought to go up the steps to the gallery. As she reaches them the UNKNOWN KNIGHT *enters from behind the galleries down S.L. She turns as she hears the sound of his armour. His vizor is down and his face cannot be seen.*

KNIGHT

The sun has all gone out of Heaven. You were not there to see.

JOANNE

(*She comes down to him.*) He was so sure of victory.

KNIGHT

(*Laughing.*) So sure was he? Well, so sure was I! And so you feared to see the end?

JOANNE

I did, my lord. (*She bows her head.*)

KNIGHT

Not all withstanding that I told you I had followed full five hundred miles across the breadth of Europe with these Crusader's arms to keep in sight of you, and then to meet you thus? Not all withstanding that, you did mistrust the fate that brought me?

JOANNE

Death finds, my lord. We cannot hide from that.

KNIGHT

Well, let it seek me first. It did not search to-day, and with the morrow I'll be gone.

JOANNE

(*In a whisper.*) Gone ?

KNIGHT

Gone. Does that hurt you ?

JOANNE

Why, my lord ?

KNIGHT

This is a pot all simmering with curiosity. I go before it boils.

JOANNE

And shall we never meet again ?

KNIGHT

Yes.

JOANNE

(*Below her breath.*) When ?

KNIGHT

To-night. Come to my tent to-night. The moon is low and still scarce fledged. There's none will see you pass.

JOANNE

My husband, my lord.

KNIGHT

Damned be such husbands! He is no mate for you. Too well you know it to play caution with me now.

JOANNE

(*Trembling with emotion.*) And must I come with eyes all blind, that shall not know the man my honour lies with?

KNIGHT

(*Laughing.*) Ah, you are simmering with the rest! What is my face to teach you better what I am? Full well you know the man you meet. 'Tis in my voice; 'tis in this hand that held my lance. (*Striking his breast.*) 'Tis here in all of me. Farewell, I know I need not ask again. Come to my tent, and you shall look into my eyes to-night.

[*As swiftly as he came he leaves her in a whirl of emotion. She stands at S.C. with her breast rising and falling as she breathes, staring before her—swept away by the power of his conviction.*

CURTAIN

SCENE II

Seven hours later

SCENE

The interior of the KNIGHT'S *tent. Down S.L. there is a couch of Eastern design. Down S.R. a rough table with a seat before it. Up S.C. is the entrance to the tent, across which a broad flap of the canvas stretches, shutting out the deep blue of the Eastern night.*

On the table a lamp of Oriental design is burning giving a dim yellow light inside the tent. The couch is covered with a purple pall. In the dim light the green of the grass looks almost black.

As curtain rises, PHIROUS, *the* KNIGHT'S *servitor or man-at-arms, is standing at the entrance to the tent, holding aside the flap and looking out when the blue night sky can be seen with its dust of stars.*

The KNIGHT, *dressed in a robe, close fitting, of a very deep wine red, such as the Knights wore when they had discarded their armour, lies on the couch with his back turned to the audience, his eyes fixed upon his servitor, who waits at the entrance of the tent.*

In silence, these attitudes should be held as long as possible.

KNIGHT

(*After a long pause.*) No sight? No sound?

PHIROUS

None, my lord. The night's asleep.

KNIGHT

Why, sure it sleeps; *her* feet would not awaken it. If there's no sound, 'tis that she comes all safe.

[*After another pause a bell is heard tolling in the far distance of the camp.*

KNIGHT

What is that bell?

[*They pause and listen, when a voice far away is heard calling:* 'Unclean—Unclean—Unclean.'

PHIROUS

A leper passing through the camp.

KNIGHT

(*For the moment forgetting the interest of his anticipation.*) 'Unclean,' he cries. Poor scum of earth! He wanders searching for a bed whereon to lay his rotting bones, and yet so foul his flesh that none will give it him. There many are as foul of heart who lie on beds of feather down, but get less honest sleep than he. (*As* PHIROUS *bends down the better to observe something that he sees.*) What do you see?

PHIROUS

A figure moves between the tents, now come into my eyes—now gone.

KNIGHT

Man or woman?

PHIROUS

I cannot tell.

KNIGHT

(*Rising—clasping his hands.*) Then I can tell. Each step that figure takes falls here. (*He strikes his hand on his heart, then with settled deliberation he crosses swiftly to a chest that stands against the canvas up S.R., taking from it first one sword, trying it, then another. Finally he selects an Oriental scimitar and, closing the chest, comes down to S.C.*) Leave watching and come here to me. (PHIROUS *comes to his side.*) This is a blade I would not lose for twice one thousand crowns. Take it, and when my lady comes keep you a guard outside the tent as close as your last drop of blood can make it. Get you without now and let her enter as she wills.

[PHIROUS *takes the sword, handles the weight of it, bows to his master, and then exits by tent entrance.*

[*The* KNIGHT *stands with his back to the audience, absolutely still, the whole line of his figure suggesting the intense emotion of his anticipation as he watches the entrance. As he stands there the flap of the tent is drawn aside and* JOANNE, *hooded and in a rich blue cloak, comes hurriedly into the tent. Without a word of welcome the* KNIGHT *immediately goes up S., hanging a curtain across the entrance; then turning and coming down S. to her as she stands there, half nervous, half amazed at her own enterprise, facing the lights.*

KNIGHT

(*At her side.*) Now are your eyes open? Now can you see the man I am? (*He stands before her as she looks at him.*)

JOANNE

(*Her head droops as her eyes fall before the passion in his.*) 'Twas true you said I knew.

KNIGHT

What is this cloak? (*He comes to her to take it off.*) We do not need disguises here. Here are we—our two selves. Let me see you, as you see me.

[*Slowly she takes off the cloak, revealing herself in the long, loose gown of that period. He takes the cloak from her, placing it on the seat by the table, then returning to her, feasting his eyes with her and taking her hands in his.*

JOANNE

Why have I come, my lord? Can you explain me that? It was a dream I walked in, as I came here to your tent. And shame I had for company, yet could not turn me back. Have you the power of magic in your voice, or what spell was it drew me here as though, the world were ending, I could not refuse?

KNIGHT

'Twas love that brought you, and when 'tis love that brings, it carries in a whirlwind none can stay.

JOANNE

Then is this love, my lord? If so, 'twill be a bitter thing with all its sweetness, and leave upon the tongue a taste that lingers with remorse.

KNIGHT

I do not know remorse.

JOANNE

Why, then, you pay no price, and some things are the sweeter that they cost the more.

KNIGHT

How should you know what price I pay? Both of us here, we bargain to forget—you, that besotted thing your life is unioned with, and now you hesitate to pay the cost. And I—what price is mine? An hour's oblivion in your arms and at such a rate of usury that I can never hope discharge the debt. (*He strides up to the curtain and half pulls it aside.*) Go, lady, if you will. I will not steal forgetfulness. But here and there and every place I go, I take it where I can. Go, if you will—my man-at-arms has charge alone to hinder those who come within.

(JOANNE *stands without movement down S.C. Watching her for a moment and waiting for her answer, he drops the curtain and comes back to her.*

KNIGHT

You do not go?

JOANNE

(*Looking up with passionate submission into his eyes.*) I cannot go, my lord.

[*He seizes her hands and a moment holds them as he looks into her eyes, then, in the full abandonment of passion, catches her in his arms, covering her neck and face with kisses.*

KNIGHT

When first I saw you in the streets of Tarsus, I saw this moment then.

JOANNE

(*Amazed.*) You saw me then, my lord? But how?

KNIGHT

(*Leading her to the couch and sitting beside her.*) I was amongst the crowd of those to watch the Crusading Arms pass by.

JOANNE

And straightway then——?

KNIGHT

From that one moment's glance I knew, and, following at my distance, came to Antioch. I've watched that man your life is wedded to. I've watched the hunger in your eyes. I've chid it bide its time, the hunger in my heart, well knowing that this hour would come—(*he takes her hands and passionately kisses them*)—when I could call you mine.

JOANNE

How found you then this entry to the lists?

KNIGHT

Nothing so easy when the heart is set on what's to do.

JOANNE

And yet you put your life to hazard when most you needed it?

KNIGHT

'Twas that way only I could catch your eye.

JOANNE

(*Touching his hands gently.*) But such a risk, my lord. Without a certain knowledge I must too have known, yet I was not as sure as you, for that was why I dared not watch the last encounter. The Sieur du Guesclin had it deep within his heart to slay you for the honour of our arms. From all they said I had made sure he would achieve his end. Had you no fear of death yourself?

KNIGHT

I? *Fear* of death? (*He pauses as though he were about to tell her all his history and then refrains.*) What should I fear? I *knew* the day was mine!

JOANNE

(*Faintly surprised at his conviction.*) Knew? How could you know?

KNIGHT

(*Realising he has said too much.*) Did I not know that you were waiting on the hour? (*Pressing his heart.*) Knew I not here you could not wait in vain!

JOANNE

I never met a man so sure of Fate as you.

KNIGHT

(*Laying his hands on her shoulders.*) You never met a man so burnt with love as I. That is the fate of us, and 'tis of that I'm sure. You will not call it love. What is it, then, to feel the very substance of my being stronger than death so it may claim you out of all the world?

JOANNE

(*The strength of her mind giving way to his.*) You speak of the body, but love is of the soul. Could you not love me thus, my lord?

KNIGHT

The soul! What soul have I? Souls only from dead bodies do depart, and here I live and still shall live to burn your lips with mine. (*He kisses her.*) As thus — (*he kisses her again*) — and thus, until no breath is left to kiss you with. (*He holds her to him and kisses her again and again.*)

JOANNE

(*Leaning away from him, gasping for her breath and feeling on her breast for a stone pendant that hangs about her neck.*) This hurts my breast, my lord, and yet I

hardly felt the pain of it. (*She takes it off and with a sudden impulse puts it in his hand.*) It is an emerald stone my father gave me. Take it, my lord—'tis yours. You've crushed it in my heart. No hand could steal the memory of it now. (*As he hesitates.*) 'Tis yours. Keep it for memory, as I will keep the pain.

KNIGHT

(*Looking at it in the palm of his hand and laying it down in acceptance on the couch. Then turning to her again and taking her fiercely in his arms so that she leans back against the shoulder of the couch.*) This night, maybe, will not see out the end. You will not call it love? I'll make you call it love. So deep we'll drink oblivion in each other's arms, you'll lose all sense of petty squabblings in your heart of right or wrong. And when the parting comes, I'll bear it as I've borne before.

JOANNE

Why should we part, my lord?

KNIGHT

Death—that will steal you from me.

JOANNE

Might we not die together—might we not die, and even now?

KNIGHT

Not now. (*He partly releases his hold of her as his mind centres for the instant on his fate.*) Not even then.

Tis I must taste the bitterness of that. (*She raises herself on her elbow to look at him. He thrusts his thoughts from him and takes her arms to bind them round his neck.*) Hold fast your arms about me. Now for this earthly moment I can live and yet forget.

[*Just as he is about to take her in his arms, she loosens her arms from his neck and with a look of horror that is yet no more than first suspicion, she presses him from her.*

JOANNE

What is this thing you are so eager to forget ?

KNIGHT

(*Trying to hold her to him.*) Pay you no heed to what I say ! All my talk's madness now.

JOANNE

(*Beginning to struggle now to hold him from her.*) Was it madness to say the parting would be yours ? To say we could not die together, you and I ? Why should we not ? Why should we not ? Death is for me in God's good time ; you said that death would be for me. Why not for you ? Speak to me ! Speak ! Why not for you ?

KNIGHT

What is the meaning of those questions heaping up ? Where is the doubt they build on ? Are you not sure that all my heart beats here to love you with ?

JOANNE

(*Following the train of her thought, dogged by the increasing suspicion in her mind.*) You had not fear of death. The day was yours, you said—you knew it. He could not kill you for you knew your fate; and then again, an hour's oblivion in my arms and at such rate of usury as you could never hope discharge. In God's name, who are you?

KNIGHT

(*Catching her as she is about to rise in horror from his side, and bearing her back on the couch as she struggles to free herself.*) 'Tis all too late to ask me that.

JOANNE

Too late to ask—but not too late to know.

[*Such horror and loathing is there in her voice that at the sound of these words he is for an instant arrested, and insensibly relaxes his hold of her as he gazes at the horror in her face.*

KNIGHT

What do you know?

JOANNE

(*Slipping from his arms and rising from the couch as she retreats from him.*) 'Tis he they spoke of——

KNIGHT

Who spoke? Of whom?

JOANNE

Of one who comes and goes about the world. (*Shuddering as she stares at him.*) Of one so vile, that even lepers would not beg their alms of him.

KNIGHT

(*Rising—a different man before her knowledge.*) Whom do you speak of with such bitter tongue?

JOANNE

Of him that did blaspheme the light of God. Of him they call the Wandering Jew. (*She searches him with her eyes. He meets her gaze.*) Where's your denial if you do find the words are bitter on my tongue?

KNIGHT

I'll not deny. 'Tis true I spat upon the Nazarene, and I would spit again if He did cross my way.

JOANNE

(*Recoiling from him.*) Oh! What horror then have I escaped! So near you'd found the depths of me! So near you'd beckoned me to follow you to Hell. (*Laughing hysterically.*) And I did try persuasions with you it was love. Love! What could you know of love? 'What soul have I?' you said. Indeed! What soul! And what soul ever will you have in all the age of time who only know the hunger of the beasts? And I had thought you brave to play at hazard in the lists with Death. Brave! Why *should* you fear? You cannot taste of Death until He comes to you again

nor will He ever come until you have a soul above the dust. (*She goes to the stool on which her cloak is lying and picks it up.*)

KNIGHT

(*As she puts her cloak about her.*) I bid you go before. Was that such hunger as you say? But now when you have touched your body against mine bethink you not that I might make you stay? Who is to hinder me?

JOANNE

Not who—but what? Is not the loathing such as this I have a sword to shield me? For when I think that mine have touched those lips that spat on Christ! Oh, sainted Mother! Shall I ever wash them clean?

[*She pulls her cloak about her in readiness to go and makes a movement towards the entrance of the tent.*

KNIGHT

(*Swiftly crossing to her and seizing her by the wrist.*) Bethink you it means aught to me of love or loathing, now my need is set? (*Against all her efforts of resistance he takes her in his arms.*) These lips shall kiss again—(*he kisses her*)—and yet again. And hating me will only add a savour to the taste of them. (*As she struggles in his arms he laughs at her efforts.*) Fight on, brave bird! The net is fast about you! If this be Hell, you have come too far ádown the road to turn your footsteps back. If this be vile, you've sinned too far already in your mind for cheating God, and shall not cheat me with your body now.

[*He is just about to lift her in his arms to carry her to the couch when the bell is heard again in the distance, a little nearer than before, and the voice cries in the same monotonous tone:* 'Unclean—Unclean—Unclean.' *Involuntarily his arms relax from her as he listens, and finding herself free she creeps towards the entrance of the tent, keeping her eyes on him as she goes, expecting him every moment to take her again by force. Her last steps are hurried as she goes out.*

[*Exit* JOANNE.

[*He stands at S.C. watching her as she goes, dazed in this first realisation of himself.*

KNIGHT

(*In the first awakening of his mind to the purpose of his soul.*) Unclean.

CURTAIN

PHASE III

CHARACTERS

MATTEO BOTTADIO.	
ANDREA MICHELOTTI	A Merchant
PIETRO MORELLI .	A Padre.
MARIO . . .	A Servant
GIANELLA BOTTADIO .	Matteo's Wife.

Scene I

PERIOD, 1290 A.D.

Scene

A room in the house of Matteo Bottadio, *the Wandering Jew, in this period a rich merchant of the city of Palermo, in Sicily.*

There is a curtained entrance down S.L. Up S., across the full breadth of the stage, stretches a logia, overgrown with grape vines, through the openings of which can be seen in the distance the deep blue curve of the bay, while in the middle distance to the left rises a hill grey with olive trees, on the summit of which can be seen the white tower of the church and the white walls of the convent of Santa Maria di Latinis.

As curtain rises, stage is empty, but immediately there appears on the logia Andrea Michelotti. *He rings a bell that is hanging from one of the rafters. Scarcely waiting for his summons to be answered, he rings again.*

Enter Mario *hurriedly through curtained entrance S.L.*

MARIO

Sir ?

ANDREA

I am Andrea Michelotti, merchant of Messina. I am a friend of your master's and must speak with him at once.

MARIO

This is the Sabbath, sir ; my master's at his prayers.

ANDREA

Praying will not avail him 'gainst the case I bring. Since when has he thus taken to his knees ?

MARIO

Since that his son was dead, sir, he has been long in prayer each day.

ANDREA

When did the boy die ?

MARIO

Two weeks have gone since he was stricken with the sun. They brought him through the logia there where they had found him near yon convent on the hill, and in this room he spent an hour in agony ere he died.

ANDREA

Well, well—disturb his prayers, lest he lose more than they could succour him. Tell him I have some news that needs but little time and it will speak itself.

MARIO

(*Bowing.*) I go at once, sir.

[*Exit* MARIO *S.L.*

[ANDREA *walks up and down the room in great disturbance of mind. As he stands for a moment down S.,* PIETRO MORELLI, *the Padre, walks into the logia as though he were about to enter the room. Seeing* ANDREA, *he turns away. Hearing his footsteps,* ANDREA *turns just too late to catch sight of him. In curiosity he moves up S. and looks out. He is in this position when* MATTEO BOTTADIO *enters at S.L.*

ANDREA

(*Coming hastily down S. to greet him.*) Matteo! (*They embrace.*)

MATTEO

What is this news that cannot wait the offer of a single prayer?

ANDREA

Matteo, the Emperor has undertaken war.

MATTEO

War! May he grow rich upon it!

ANDREA

(*Significantly.*) He needs his riches first.

MATTEO

(*Seizing him by the arm he realises the significance of this.*) Speak out, Andrea. Say the worst.

ANDREA

Our time of peace is over, Matteo. The persecution has begun again.

MATTEO

Where? Where does it fester now?

ANDREA

Three Jews but yesterday were killed in the town of Messina, and all their goods were confiscated by the State. Three days ago, there in Ajaccio, six more were taken, two under torture, four burnt at the stake. Our few short years of peace are gone.

MATTEO

Your sign is sure enough. This scourge of persecution is a fire which, with a favouring wind to fan it, spreads like contagion through the land. Oft have I watched its flames lick up the startled heavens, whilst all across the breadth of Europe lifted the cries of our unhappy race. (*In despair.*) What is this curse that wreaks itself on them—and me!

ANDREA

You know as well as I the thing they say.

MATTEO

(*Half to himself.*) That we did crucify their Christ.

ANDREA

A Jew as we are! Had we no right to mete out justice to our own?

MATTEO

(*Turning away from him.*) And yet—for well-nigh thirteen hundred years! What an eternity of punishment to have lived!

ANDREA

'Twill be our last, Matteo, if we do not set Palermo at our backs to-night.

MATTEO

(*Turning quickly and coming to him in a sudden fear of realisation.*) Our last, Andrea! Why should I fear that now?

ANDREA

Your blood is warm, Matteo. Why wonder that a fear of death should chill it? You are a young man still.

MATTEO

(*With a hollow and bitter laugh.*) Still! Still! (*His tone changes.*) I am a man, Andrea, who has heaped out the bitterness of life with things his hands can finger and his heart can call his own. These only do remain while those we cherish most come to the dust and leave no particle for memory. Where is my son now who, but a few days gone, was clinging in my arms? The dust is in his eyes that once were bright with love. Let but a year pass by and I could take him in my hand as thus—(*he holds out his hand as though it were full of dust*)—and let him filter through my fingers. (*He strides across to a table, picking up a jewelled crucifix that is lying there.*) 'Tis only such as this remain. I bought

it yesterday. A beggar had it 'neath his shirt against the withered parchment of his breast, and hugged it there until the piece of gold I played with coaxed it from him. These gems are rare. 'Tis worth a thousand crowns of gold. And yet—(*he holds it out before him*)—though it is mine— (*He suddenly raises his hand to dash it to the ground.*)

ANDREA

(*In consternation at the thought of its destruction, taking it from him.*) Matteo! Why destroy it? You might sell it for a noble sum.

MATTEO

(*Taking it greedily from* ANDREA'S *hand.*) Then give it me. 'Tis mine. I'd no real thought to break it. (*Looking at it strangely.*) I should have once. Time was when I had had no fear.

ANDREA

(*Laying his hands on* MATTEO'S *shoulder.*) Friend, you speak strangely, and for the Bottadio I knew in Napoli you do, unlike yourself, leave the certain issue too long untouched for these vague speculations. What if it should be fear that made you set that bauble down? You have good cause for it. So have we all. One of your ships lies in the harbour now. Be well advised by me and flee to-night with all that you possess, and ere the sun rise on another day, up anchor and be gone.

MATTEO

(*Brushing his eyes with the back of his hand as he puts the thoughts from him.*) You speak well, Andrea.

This is no hour for idle thoughts. There are the years all yet to come. (*As though he suddenly realised the full force of the fate that is overtaking them, he moves quickly to a great coffer chest at S.R., unlocking it and beginning to take out silks and embroideries, bags of money, small boxes containing precious stones, etc., talking all the time that he does so.*) What would this be worth in open mart of Napoli to-day? (*He partly unrolls a bale of silk and spreads it out for* ANDREA *to see.*)

ANDREA

(*Feeling it with the touch of a connoisseur.*) How did you come by this?

MATTEO

I sang a song and it fell in my hands.

ANDREA

'Twas not spun yesterday.

MATTEO

(*Taking it from him—almost jealously—and rolling it up with hands that touch with love.*) Nor yet the day before. (*He lays it down, then out of the chest brings three crucifixes, one after the other, and laughs as he holds them out.*) 'Twould make you think I had some failing in my heart for these. (*Smiling.*) Perhaps I have. Perhaps it turns a laugh in me to see them sell their Christ; for when their fortunes cross them they're all eagerness to sell, and when their fortunes smile they flatter Him and—buy. (*Putting down two of the crucifixes and still holding one in his hand*

and looking at it before he puts it down.) Perhaps I have some failing in my heart to keep this—thing—this man—before my eyes. (*Turning.*) They swear, Andrea, that He has risen from the grave—and some there were did meet and speak with Him. (*Fiercely.*) 'Tis all a lie! He has not come the way of earth again.

ANDREA

Matteo—Matteo! What is this change in you to linger thus? Speak! Speak! The sun is dropping even now.

MATTEO

(*Putting the crucifix with the other things and going on with his work.*) You're right, Andrea. I sometimes feel I am a different man. (*He takes some other things out of the chest; then brings out a little box, is just about to put it down, when pride of possession impels him to show its contents. He brings out a big emerald and holds it up to the light, beckoning to* ANDREA *to come and look at it.*) 'Twas given me.

ANDREA

Given? What fool was it to give so much away? (*He wants to take it in his hands but* MATTEO *draws away.*)

MATTEO

(*Reminiscently.*) She had no other folly than a beating heart.

ANDREA

Where did she give it you ?

MATTEO

Outside the walls of Antioch.

ANDREA

When were you in Antioch ?

MATTEO

(*Smiling to himself.*) Some—years—ago.

ANDREA

You are a strange man, Matteo. Where are the places that your feet have never touched ?

MATTEO

Where ? Nowhere. I have travelled long and far. (*He puts the box away, taking more things out of the chest, then, coming to a necklace of precious stones, he holds that up.*) I bought that from another Jew in Cyprus, to lie on Gianella's neck—then feared that she might lose it and locked it there. Gianella ! (*His whole tone changes to that of jealous suspicion.*) Where have my thoughts been gone since you did come here with your news ? I cannot go to-night.

ANDREA

You cannot ?

MATTEO

Cannot! There is that to be made plain to me my mind is all confused with. My boy is gone from me. (*He draws* ANDREA *to him.*) And now there steals a fear in me—my wife!

ANDREA

She too is ill?

MATTEO

Ill at heart, Andrea.

ANDREA

Why, then it is the sorrow that she feels.

MATTEO

That might be so. She was distraught with grief, and for that cause I counted first the change her manner showed to me.

ANDREA

What change?

MATTEO

She does avoid who sought me once. Turns a deaf ear on all my consolations. Each day since that our boy was dead, it is as though she heard some voice that called her from my side. When in the midst of talking, with a sigh she will rise up and leave me.

ANDREA

Grief will so turn a woman. Pity can never heal the wound a mother's heart sustains.

MATTEO

I thought so too, and had begun to set my count upon it. But there's some spirit come into the house to steal her from me.

ANDREA

What man would dare?

MATTEO

(*Looking out towards the logia, then closely at* ANDREA.) Pietro Morelli, a padre of Palermo. 'Twas he who found our boy up by the convent there. He found him stretched upon the hill like one who was already dead, and in his arms he brought him here and offered help, and watched with us beside him when he died. I took his hand in friendship—that hand that robs me now. I bid him come again—(*bitterly*)—and he has come; again when I was here—again when I was not. Last week my business took me there to Napoli, and when I did return, my servant, Mario, told me he had been here each day—each day to see her.

ANDREA

Have you asked her of this?

MATTEO

I spoke his name in casual way and, unsuspicious, she did lie to me. He had been there; he came one

day, she said, to make his kind inquiries, but no more. Lies! Lies!

ANDREA

'Twas him I heard, then, while I waited here. I went into the logia to look out and saw the shoulders of a man in black drop down below the hill.

MATTEO

'Twas he. He comes to meet her, presuming on my friendship, and trusting for chance to speak with her alone. There's that in progress keeps me here to-night.

ANDREA

Why *keeps* you? Load *all* you have. She's yours. Load *all* you have and then be gone.

MATTEO

Ah, take the husk and leave that which I need the most!

ANDREA

What more can you need than that she be a wife?

MATTEO

She has a soul, Andrea, above the littleness of life. 'Tis that I cling to as it were one holding to a floating spar that bears his head above the waters of a tossing sea. When in her eyes I see it there, I almost can believe that life is worth the courage and the patience we must bring to live it with.

ANDREA

How then could such an one prove false and give her body for a Christian's lust?

MATTEO

You do not understand me; 'tis her heart she's given. What if her body is still mine? That sure I might have treasured once, but now her heart is gone, and what is left for touching's but the soiling clay.

ANDREA

You do not know this yet. Send for her now and tell her the news I bring. If they have meetings ready planned she'll fret at thought of going and dissemble and postpone.

MATTEO

That is well thought. I'll ask her which she sooner would, that we go now or take the treacherous hazard of another day; and if she hangs on fate, I'll leave her here alone. She knows he lingers on the hill. She'll call him in if I but stay her fears of my disturbance. So then, I'll watch them, and let him but touch her hand—(*touching the knife in his girdle*)—and then——

ANDREA

(*Fearful for his friend and for himself.*) What would you do?

MATTEO

Is death too good that you could ask me what I'd do? (*He claps his hands for* MARIO.)

ANDREA

Matteo, has jealousy made you mad? If you should kill a padre of their Church, no hope could save you. The blade with which you strike you might well turn on yourself.

MATTEO

Suppose it broke—that blade. (*In sudden thought of his fear of death.*) It might not now. Yet would you have me with no entrails of a man, and stand in idleness whiles he tore out the heart of me?

Enter MARIO.

Mario, fetch me your mistress—here, at once.

[MARIO *bows and exits.*

[MATTEO *heaps all the things he has taken out of the chest, closes the chest, and piles them on the top.*

MATTEO

These things have been my touch with life—till now. So we deceive the heart that's in us, Andrea, and never guess the lies we tell it—till it breaks.

[MARIO *holds aside the curtain at S.L. for* GIANELLA *as she enters.*

GIANELLA

(*As the curtain falls behind her.*) You sent for me.

MATTEO

Here is Andrea Michelotti, whom you will remember —he of Napoli.

ANDREA

(*Bowing to* GIANELLA *as she bows.*) I am an unwelcome guest, Signora, for I have brought evil news.

GIANELLA

What news?

MATTEO

The persecution has begun again. All that we have, even our lives, are threatened. We must fly to-night.

GIANELLA

(*Distressed.*) To-night?

MATTEO

(*As they both watch her.*) Why not to-night?

GIANELLA

Do you leave all you have behind you?

MATTEO

I do leave nothing that is mine.

GIANELLA

Yet what time is there, Matteo? Look—the evening's falling now.

MATTEO

Necessity will make time.

ANDREA

And sure necessity it is. Three Jews were killed in Messina yesterday, Signora.

GIANELLA

It was all quiet in Palermo. Yesterday is not to-day.

MATTEO

It may be to-morrow. To-morrow all Sicily will be crying for our blood, and as it was in their Crusades when they waged war upon the Saracens, so now. They'll fill their coffers with our little all.

GIANELLA

But—but I must tend the grave before I go—the grave where he lies buried, and I must——

MATTEO

And you must do of countless things that all contrive to bid you say we cannot go to-night?

GIANELLA

Matteo, have patience with me. This news is sudden as 'tis ill. I am all unprepared to hear it.

MATTEO

So be it. We do not go to-night; but I will see about my business now and make all ready to set sail

to-morrow. Andrea here will come with us and he shall help—(*He stops as* PIETRO MORELI *appears on the logia*)—Ah! here is our friend, the padre. Enter—enter, friend. Perhaps you come to hear our news.

PIETRO

(*Coming down S.*) What news?

MATTEO

Andrea Michelotti here has come post-haste from Messina to bring it us.

PIETRO

What news, sir?

ANDREA

They say the Emperor does need money for his chests of war.

PIETRO

(*Smiling.*) Well? That is an old tale.

MATTEO

Old as the Sistine Hills! But where in need, think you, he'll seek it? When gold is needed for the arms of Christ, where does it come from, padre? Can you say?

PIETRO

How should I say? How do I know?

MATTEO

I'll tell you then. There comes a whisper like a cry far out at sea which all the winds of heaven gather slowly in their arms until they shout it out in thunder 'cross the breadth of Europe—'From the Jews!' And straightway all the mighty engines of your faith all set at work to crush us to the dust. So has it been for thirteen hundred years.

PIETRO

Since that one evil day when they did nail Christ to the cross.

MATTEO

And—spat on Him. (*Pause.*) Gianella, the padre is our guest. Attend on him whilst I and Andrea here go and make ready. Let us not be disturbed. Light you the lantern for the padre, should he need it, when he goes.

[ANDREA *bows and goes towards the curtain S.L.* MATTEO *bows,* PIETRO *does likewise.* MATTEO *goes to curtain, holding it aside for* ANDREA, *who goes out.* MATTEO *follows him.*

GIANELLA

(*Standing a moment watching* PIETRO, *then, as he takes a step towards her, about to speak.*) Wait. I did not like the temper of his voice. (*She goes to curtain, cautiously pulling it aside and looking through the opening, then, satisfied, returning to* PIETRO.) He has gone. Now tell me—what news?

PIETRO

I bring a message from the convent on the hill.

GIANELLA

You have spoken with the Abbess?

PIETRO

This day I spoke with her.

GIANELLA

What has she said?

PIETRO

She will accept you this very night, and on the morrow the Bishop of Palermo will there attend to receive you into Holy Mother Church.

[*As he finishes speaking,* MATTEO *appears on the logia. He creeps cautiously, seeking shelter behind one of the pillars, where he watches them.*

GIANELLA

Then so it comes at last, and all my prayers are answered. Yet now that my soul is sated full with joy, my heart beats sadly for him I must leave behind.

PIETRO

With your example set before his eyes, might he not too embrace the faith?

GIANELLA

Never! No torture is devised that could wring out a Christian oath from him.

PIETRO

Would you rather that I left you so? The Church invites but not compels.

GIANELLA

It does compel me, Father, in my soul. I know that there alone is peace for me. And yet he loves me in some wild jealous way, as he would love the thing he calls his own.

[*The evening is falling fast now, and the light is dying in the sky. The figure of* MATTEO *can but dimly be seen behind the pillar of the logia.*

PIETRO

(*Coming to* GIANELLA.) Signora, Christ calls those who will hear His voice. Maybe the time will come when He will call your husband too. This is your parting of the ways. He is not jealous, but you cannot keep your all and follow Him. Search closely in your heart before you take this way. He does not ask a greater love than they can give who find it in their souls to come to Him. But love is love and gives with both its hands, nor hides nor cheats itself to hold aught back.

GIANELLA

Then that is how I love, Father, and that is how I come to Him, with both hands open—(*she holds them out*)—and with both hands full——

PIETRO

(*Taking her hands in his.*) I knew it must be so. Christ never calls in vain.

[*He stops, letting fall her hands, as* MATTEO *strides into the room from the logia. His knife is in his hand as he comes to* PIETRO *with clear determination in his eyes to kill.*

MATTEO

This moment is your last, padre! If prayers are on your tongue then say them quick.

GIANELLA

(*Coming swiftly to him and holding his arm.*) Matteo! Matteo! What would you do?

MATTEO

I could not hear how he did speak his love, but all do speak the same. Your hands were held in his that would not touch a Christian so if love were not the cause of it. Take off your hand! (*He pushes her aside.*) I'll wait one moment for his prayers.

GIANELLA

Matteo! This is not true. He takes me for the Church, not for himself.

MATTEO

(*Dropping his hand that holds the knife.*) What's that you say?

GIANELLA

To-night the Abbess admits me to the Convent of Santa Maria di Latinis.

MATTEO

This is not true! 'Tis all a trick to blind me.

GIANELLA

It is true, Matteo. The light of God has fallen on my soul.

MATTEO

(*Standing away from her in horror, then looking at* PIETRO.) This is the viper that has stung you!

GIANELLA

There is no poison in my mind but the clear light of God.

MATTEO

(*Approaching* PIETRO.) To-day I thought you were her lover, setting your snare to steal her body from my arms; but thus to steal her soul—that is a theft more damnable than all.

PIETRO

I have stolen nothing. Her soul is still her own and never has been in another's keeping.

MATTEO

Her soul, you say. How have you done this thing? (*He takes his arm and turns him round to see his face.*) What magic have you used? (*He looks into his eyes.*) No! There's no such light in yours. What is this trick you Christians play?

PIETRO

No trick, Matteo. Her wandering spirit in its grief has found her Christ.

MATTEO

Found Christ! The Nazarene!

GIANELLA

Deep in my heart, Matteo, He has come to me.

MATTEO

(*Hiding his face in his hands.*) The Nazarene! What is His purpose thus with me to ever turn the joys of life to ashes on my tongue? (*Turning to* PIETRO *with a depth of pain in his voice.*) Leave us. If she must bid farewell to me, then let us be alone.

GIANELLA

(*To* PIETRO.) Wait for me there upon the hill and I will join you soon.

[PIETRO *bows his head and exits.*

MATTEO

(*Standing a moment staring at her, then crossing to her.*) This is not true!

GIANELLA

It is. (*She points towards the convent.*) My only peace of mind is there.

MATTEO

If in the name of love I prayed you stay, would you not stay with me?

GIANELLA

It would not be for love, Matteo, if you prayed me that. The love that burns in you is only jealous to possess.

MATTEO

Where else is it, if not in love, a man can claim his own?

GIANELLA

Love gives, Matteo, not demands. Could you but give you might then gain.

MATTEO

(*Putting his arms about her and holding her to him. Behind her back it can be seen he has his knife ready in his hand to press into her vitals.*) Yet if I hold you thus and for the love you were content to once call love, should swear I would not let you go, what would you do?

GIANELLA

Would not your arms grow tired in time? To gain and keep the thing you need, and so believe it is your touch with life—that is the end.

MATTEO

(*Holding her more closely to him as though there were a terror in his heart to lose her.*) But, Gianella, you have meant so much to me. If I should lose you, now our boy is gone, the very world were emptied like a pitcher at my feet, and I must bear the drought of life alone.

GIANELLA

Matteo, we belong not to each other, but to God. I do not go because I would, I go because I must.

MATTEO

(*Passionately.*) Yet here's our life together now. As long as breath is in you, you belong to me. The dust is God's. Let Him take that when He has made it His.

GIANELLA

What is this life but dust? Dust rising into shape beneath the breath of God, and sinking into dust again as it comes to its end?

MATTEO

But if I held you thus *until* the end, and if that end were near?

GIANELLA

What end?

MATTEO

(*Preparing to press home his knife.*) Death!

GIANELLA

If you would kill me, then I still should be with Christ.

MATTEO

(*His arms falling limply from about her.*) Have you no fear of death?

GIANELLA

Not now that He has come to me.

MATTEO

(*Standing away from her.*) Take up your lantern then and go. (*He bows his head to the inevitable.*) I am not he who dares to deal with death.

[GIANELLA *slowly moves towards the logia, where she picks up the lantern and with a tinder lights it, then crosses the logia into the fallen darkness. The light of her lantern can be seen swinging in her hand as she moves across the hill in the darkness.* MATTEO *stands there watching it almost as though he were drawn to follow.* ANDREA *at this moment enters through the curtain down S.L. Coming to* MATTEO'S *side, he stands watching him.*

ANDREA

What light is that?

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MATTEO

(*In a hollow voice.*) That is the light by which some tread their way to Christ.

[*As he takes half a step forward,* ANDREA *lays his hand on his shoulder, detaining him. He stops but does not turn, standing there and watching the light as it goes away in the distance.*

SLOW CURTAIN

PHASE IV

CHARACTERS

Matteos Battadios . .	The Wandering Jew.
Juan de Texeda . .	Inquisitor-General.
Gonzalez Ferera . .	The Fiscal.
Alonzo Castro . .	The Confessor.
Lazzaro Zapportas . .	A Jew Merchant.
Arnaldo Zapportas . .	His Son.
Al Kazar . . .	A Moorish Servant.
Maria Zapportas . .	The Merchant's Wife.
Olalla Quintana . .	A Harlot.

Usher, Bellman's Crier, Councillors of the Inquisition, Soldiers, Men and Women of Seville, a Messenger.

SCENE I

PERIOD, 1560 A.D.

SCENE

This is a room in MATTEOS BATTADIOS' *house in Seville. There is an entrance up S.C. into the street. Another entrance covered by a curtain S.L.*

(*As curtain rises,* AL KAZAR, *the Moorish servant, is speaking to a messenger, a native of Seville, dressed in the costume of a poor man of the period.*)

AL KAZAR

Since she is not in her house and they know nought of where she is, my master bids you seek the Church of San Stefanos. If she is not there upon her knees, ask of the confessor if he has tended to Olalla Quintana this morn. Go with all speed and come not back again till you bring news of her.

[*The servant takes the messenger to the door and shows him out. Then, having closed it and as he comes back to exit at S.L., a knocking falls on the street door. Imperturbably he turns and goes back to door up S.C.*

ZAPPORTAS

(*Appearing with his wife and child in the street as the door is opened.*) Is this the house of the doctor, Battadios?

SERVANT

It is. (*Admitting* ZAPPORTAS *and his wife and child.*) Enter.

ZAPPORTAS

Can I have speech with him ?

SERVANT

My master will attend you here.

[*Exit* SERVANT *S.L.*

ZAPPORTAS

(*Looking about him at the magnificence of the room in which he finds himself.*) Sick bodies serve these doctors well. This Battadios will dip deep his hand in my purse ere he heals the boy.

MARIA

He's the most learned doctor in Seville. They say there is no man so wise or good. I heard but yesterday there is one Olalla Quintana, a harlot, and he has saved her from disgrace and brought her to her faith again. Of such deeds to what better man could we have come ?

ZAPPORTAS

Deeds are not skill. A doctor in our quarter would have done as well. (*He looks about the room, moving here and there, and examining various things as he speaks.*)

MARIA

(*With spirit rising—her voice with it.*) Lazzaro, you do mingle usury with love.

ZAPPORTAS

(*Apprehensively.*) Keep your lips closed upon that word. If he should hear my practice was of usury, he then would know that we were Jews. Have I not told you oft enough it better were to be a dog and prowl the gutters of Seville than with their Inquisition spies abroad to be as one of us.

MARIA

What sin is it to be a Jew?

ZAPPORTAS

They'll find the sin with speed enough if there be money there to pay its penance. The resources of the Inquisition will not fail by that. They say by usury—when 'tis by thrift—we suck the people's wealth into our purses. They make it known we've brought the leprosy to Spain.

MARIA

(*With a note of fear.*) The leprosy.

ZAPPORTAS

They say it is a plague peculiar to our people and is spread by them.

MARIA

That is a lie.

ZAPPORTAS

It serves as well as truth.

MARIA

Can this be Christianity ?

ZAPPORTAS

One Christian only has there been. 'Tis He that was a Jew. (*He has been walking round the room examining various things, looking at them and appraising them greedily with his eyes as he talks. Coming to a dagger, he picks it up carefully.*) Here is a treasure that a thousand years and more have kept for him to buy. The blade is broken in two pieces that are held together, but the hilt is sound. I'd pay five hundred crowns for this and make my price on it in any market you might name.

[MATTEOS BATTADIOS *pulls aside the curtains and is seen at S.L.*

BATTADIOS

You wished to see me. (*Indicating the dagger as* ZAPPORTAS *in confusion puts it down.*) Is it about that ?

ZAPPORTAS

(*Confused.*) Sir, I was but speaking of the beauty of its workmanship and age.

MATTEOS

(*Crossing to him, taking it up in his hand and looking at it with a long glance, then at* ZAPPORTAS.) You can appreciate ?

ZAPPORTAS

The value? It is worth at least three hundred crowns.

MATTEOS

(*Looking at him straightly and comprehensively.*) Would you purchase it for that?

ZAPPORTAS

(*Eagerly.*) I would.

MATTEOS

You would do well at such a price. (*He puts it back in its place.*) But it is not for sale.

ZAPPORTAS

From what place, sir, did it come?

MATTEOS

I found it in a house in Jerusalem.

ZAPPORTAS

In Jerusalem! That hilt has seen six hundred years and more.

MATTEOS

You reckon well, and wisely say 'and more.' But if not this, then what is it you wish of me?

MARIA

Our son——

ZAPPORTAS

The boy is sick. He talks of fever in his eyes.

MARIA

And yesterday three sores broke out upon his skin.

MATTEOS

(*Approaching* ARNALDO.) Have you felt this fever long ?

ARNALDO

For some three days, sir. 'Tis like two irons, all red hot, that press against my eyes.

MATTEOS

(*Pulling aside curtain S.L.*) Come this way. (*As he passes out.*) I will be with you now.

[*Exit* ARNALDO.

(*To* ZAPPORTAS.) Where do you come from ?

ZAPPORTAS

I am of this city.

MATTEOS

Was this your place of birth ?

ZAPPORTAS

No—no. I am of Catalonia.

MATTEOS

And the boy ?

MARIA

He was born in Seville.

MATTEOS

What age is he ?

MARIA

Thirteen years.

MATTEOS

(*To* ZAPPORTAS.) What trade have you here in Seville ?

ZAPPORTAS

I am a merchant, sir, an honourable trade.

MATTEOS

They say it is not oft a Jew does trade with honour.

ZAPPORTAS

(*In fear.*) Sir ! I am not a Jew ! I am a Spaniard and good Christian.

MATTEOS

Seville has twenty Jews to one good Christian.

ZAPPORTAS

'Tis not for me to say that I am good. But I will swear I am a Spaniard and a Christian too.

MATTEOS

'Twere better keep your oaths for nobler purpose. (*He moves to curtain S.L.*) Presently I will return and give you my report.

[*Exit* MATTEOS *S.L.*

ZAPPORTAS

(*In fear.*) What did he mean? For nobler purpose? Why should he not believe my oath?

MARIA

'Twere hard to ring the note of truth, Lazzaro, in such an oath as that.

ZAPPORTAS

And yet I spoke it firm enough. Maria! If he should be a spy!

MARIA

This cannot be. They say his kindness to the poor is past belief. Two years ago, when all Seville was smitten with the plague, himself went out to every house, holding his life there in his hands, a sacrifice for rich and poor alike. How could a nature such as that descend to spying work?

ZAPPORTAS

I hear him come. His money's quickly earned.

MARIA

So soon. Then surely all is well. I have been nursing but a mother's fears.

Enter MATTEOS *S.L. He is alone.*

MARIA

(*Eagerly.*) What is it, sir ?

MATTEOS

'Tis what I did suspect. You both will need be stout of heart.

MARIA

(*In fear.*) What is it, sir ?

MATTEOS

(*Looking steadily at them.*) The leprosy.

ZAPPORTAS

God of Abraham !

MATTEOS

'Tis ever in the hour of need men claim the God they know. (MARIA *breaks down, crying bitterly.*) Why had you shame to say you were a Jew ? (*Laying his hand on* MARIA'S *shoulder.*) Go to your son. (*He leads her, weeping, towards curtain S.L. and shows her out.*) Courage, not hope, will help you now. If it should fail you, come to me.

[*Exit* MARIA.

ZAPPORTAS

(*As* MATTEOS *approaches him, grasping and clinging to his hand in an agony of fear.*) Have pity, sir ! It was not shame, but these are evil days in which to be a Jew. (*His terror becomes pitiable.*) God's blessing if you will have pity, sir !

MATTEOS

My friend, so many times I've seen the terror that you feel. You have a little fortune saved. I know, I know. That honest trade has served you well and now you fear to lose it all. It is your touch with life.

ZAPPORTAS

'Tis but enough, sir, for my needs.

MATTEOS

I know, I know. That cheats the ears of men, Zapportas. It does not cheat the ears of God. He knows too well your dearest need.

ZAPPORTAS

My dearest need?

MATTEOS

To hold what you have got, and to that end you'd swear you are a Christian and no Jew. As time goes on—even in your short years of life—you'll come to know it better were to spend than keep, and better than them all—to give away.

ZAPPORTAS

But, sir, if these Inquisitors do come to know, then I must give my life!

MATTEOS

Fortunate man, fortunate man! By such means only can you gain it. You cry for pity and beg me save

you, but there's such terror in your heart, my word alone could bring your conscience little ease.

ZAPPORTAS

(*Shaking with fear.*) If you would give your oath, I would believe.

MATTEOS

Oaths are but sentiments of faith. Yet if you need assurance, would I betray my own?

ZAPPORTAS

(*Amazed.*) *You* are a Jew?

MATTEOS

'Twas that I said.

ZAPPORTAS

But all do think you are a Christian in Seville.

MATTEOS

All men are Christians—all are Jews. The avowal of his faith does only mask a man. It does not make him what he is. Get you from the city now as quickly as you may. I'll send your wife and son to you.

ZAPPORTAS

(*Turning at door suspiciously.*) How do I know you will keep faith with me?

MATTEOS

Look in your own heart. You will find it there.

ZAPPORTAS

(*As he goes.*) I find no trust of any man when I look in my heart. (*As he turns.*) My life is in your hands, sir, and 'tis dear to me.

[ZAPPORTAS *tries to look him in the face, then, lowering his head, he goes. Exit* ZAPPORTAS.

[MATTEOS *watches him go, then moves across to where the dagger is lying and picks it up, reminiscently looking at it as it lies in his hand. He does not look round as a knock falls imperatively on the door. A moment later the Moorish servant enters, goes to the door and opens it, when* OLALLA *is seen standing in the street. Her voice and manner are distracted.*

OLALLA

(*Out of breath.*) Your master ?

MATTEOS

(*Putting the dagger down and turning at once*). Olalla !

[*She comes in swiftly, crossing at once to him. They stand waiting while the servant exits S.L.*

MATTEOS

Where have you been ? What has happened ?

OLALLA

An evil thing has happened, master. This morn, as I was going to the Church of San Stefanos, two men

stepped out from some place where there was none about and bid me in Texeda's name to follow them and say no word.

MATTEOS

Texeda! The Inquisitor-General.

OLALLA

They brought me before him in the council chamber and, from a paper, these words: 'It would go hard with Christ to know His own, if He should come again.'

MATTEOS

My words to you.

OLALLA

And mine to some poor fool who spread them swift about. They asked me what I meant by them, which, as you spoke them, meant so much to me and, as I answered, gave such poor account. It seemed they satisfied themselves the words were not the texture of my mind, for when they'd plied me questions one upon another fast, they let me go.

MATTEOS

(*Smiling at her.*) The fox to his lair, the bird to her nest.

OLALLA

Master! What do you mean?

MATTEOS

Had you so fondly thought they'd set you free? They did but send you back to seek the hand that fed you.

[*She stares at him in horror for a moment, then, hurrying swiftly to the window, she cautiously pulls the curtains and looks out, dropping the curtains suddenly with an exclamation of fear.*

OLALLA

Two men stand there and talk together in the street! 'Tis scarce an hour I saw them in the council chamber!

MATTEOS

That was as sure as any beast is set of purpose when he drives his prey to earth.

OLALLA

Oh, tell me what to do. For in my heart I *am* afraid.

MATTEOS

Afraid of what?

OLALLA

Their tortures and their hands upon my neck.

MATTEOS

You need not fear. It is the heart that spoke those words they need. The lips are nought to them.

OLALLA

(*Looking at him in horror—then suddenly bending down, taking his hand and pressing it to her lips.*) Master! What have I done? God could not rob me thus!

MATTEOS

Of what could you be robbed?

OLALLA

Of love. I love you as Mary of Magdala must have loved her Christ.

MATTEOS

(*Taking his hand from her and closing his eyes in inner contemplation.*) The Nazarene.

OLALLA

'Tis what you seem to me.

MATTEOS

Has He then come so near to me as that? Had you but seen Him, Olalla, you would not speak such idle words as these. His eyes, His voice, alone they would have stilled your fears. He would have made you ready to take hands with death. 'Tis not in me to do such thing as that. (*With sudden inspiration of prescience.*) Yet there is one thing, if the God of Heaven grants it, I can do.

OLALLA

What shall it be?

MATTEOS

(*Taking her hands.*) You fear to die. Then death's not yet for you. It has been long for me. (*He turns towards the curtain at S.L.*)

OLALLA

(*Stretching out her hand in frightened apprehension and detaining him.*) What do you mean to do ?

MATTEOS

Call my servant and bid him bring those men within.

OLALLA

Master—it might mean death !

MATTEOS

Could it mean more ? It might so well mean less. Some days ago, do you recall, we talked of death—the great mysterious journey on which a man sets forth from this ill-kept and troubled harbour of his life.

OLALLA

I do recall it, every word.

MATTEOS

So then would I set forth. This life has harboured me too long, and all my soul is aching with the chains that bind me. But now upon my ears this sounds as though it were a summons to the open sea. You come to me and bring me love. You've brought me more

than that. Here, for some honest cause, to save you from the pains of death, I can submit my life, if 'tis acceptable, to God.

OLALLA

Your life? But what is mine to yours? But three months gone I was a harlot, spurned by everyone. My soul is not yet cleansed of it.

MATTEOS

Must you not live then till it is made clean?

OLALLA

But they have set me free. They would not kill me now, and you would rob me of that staff on which I lean towards Christ. Master! Master! Have pity! I cannot walk alone. How could death mean so much to you as your life means to me?

MATTEOS

(*Now faced with the supremest sacrifice in his life.*) Olalla! If you but knew what memories you stirred! Once I did plead, as thus, to keep one by my side, because I feared to walk alone; but she was called, and I was left.

OLALLA

Surely there's none could call you from me now! I need your life so much!

MATTEOS

(*Bowing his head in the anguish of his struggle with himself.*) Is this the meaning of it all—that here, when

most I thought I'd found the end, I must myself forego it? (*Beating his hands.*) Indeed, I see it all too clear. Still am I seeking to forget. Still am I setting up myself as once when I did spit on that I knew was truer than myself. Here's not the end! I must go on. I must go on.

[*A knock falls heavily on the door. They both turn and stare at it.*

OLALLA

Master! 'Tis they! You will not leave me?

MATTEOS

(*Touching her assuringly with his hand.*) You need not fear.

[AL KAZAR *enters by curtains and goes to door, opening it, when* CASTRO, *the Confessor, and* FERERA, *the Fiscal, are seen outside. They enter without question.*

FERERA

Sir, we have cause to ask you what is the meaning of this woman in your house?

OLALLA

(*Quickly.*) I have been ill of health and am come here for his attendance.

FERERA

When we have need to question you, you can reply. I await your answer, sir.

MATTEOS

I can content you with no better answer than you have received.

FERERA

I have it here upon the authority of the Holy Inquisition to bring you before the Council, where such questions will be put to you as must enforce reply.

MATTEOS

I am at your service.

FERERA

(*Going with* CASTRO *to the door.*) Then follow us.

OLALLA

(*Beneath her breath.*) Master! Master! You will not let me be alone?

MATTEOS

Still have you fear I do not know the road? I do.

[*He follows them out into the street.* OLALLA *drags her footsteps after them.*

CURTAIN

SCENE II

SCENE

The Tribunal Chamber of the Inquisition. As curtain rises the Councillors are seated at a long table, with JUAN DE TEXEDA, *the Inquisitor-General, in the centre, and at the back of his chair,* CASTRO, *the Confessor, and* FERERA, *the Fiscal.*

TEXEDA

(*Studying a document that lies on the table before him, then picking it up as he addresses the Councillors.*) Brothers, in my experience there has been for long no matter of such deep import as this. The woman we saw yesterday, and did interrogate upon her heresy, we have had closely watched. We did believe the words she uttered in substance only were upon her lips. We did presume the spirit of their blasphemy had found its concept in some shrewder mind than hers. We asked ourselves what company she kept. We set her free to learn such knowledge for ourselves, well knowing how first her thoughts would be to seek for confidence the mind that nurtured her.

FIRST COUNCILLOR

Where was she found ?

TEXEDA

In the house of Matteos Battadios, whose name is known to all here present, and to the very walls of our Seville.

FIRST COUNCILLOR

Has he been arrested?

TEXEDA

Yesterday, without delay. He waits within our prison, and this Tribunal must now decide what is the proper course to take. I say this matter is of deep import, because, should but this charge be proved against him, it cannot be overlooked he is a man well known and loved of many in Seville—by poor and rich alike, for whom he oft has hazarded his life. Brothers, this is no ordinary offender, but one on whom, for the honour of this court, a judgment must be strictly weighed.

Yet far above the honour of this court stands high the honour of the Church of Christ, in deep contempt of which, if it be proved against him, this man has uttered violent words.

FERERA

He may explain some other meaning to our satisfaction.

TEXEDA

Yet 'tis the man our wisdom has most need to dwell upon. Our issue then is first to learn, did he entrust such words to her? How does he bear himself?

CASTRO

Well.

FIRST COUNCILLOR

What has he said since he was brought here?

CASTRO

I have tried to draw him into speech, but he will not reply. 'I will await my judgment.' That was all he said.

FERERA

I had one set to watch him in his room last night.

TEXEDA

Was he at his prayers?

FERERA

If so, they were within the silence of his heart. He did not fall upon his knees, but sat there staring at the wall as though he waited for some sign to show itself.

CASTRO

Let us question the woman Quintana before we have him here before us.

TEXEDA

It were as well. Let her be brought.

[*The* USHER *summons* OLALLA. *In the pause that follows in these proceedings,* TEXEDA *consults with* FERERA.

Enter USHER *with* OLALLA.

TEXEDA

How long has this Battadios been a doctor in Seville?

CASTRO

Some sixteen or seventeen years.

TEXEDA

And before then? From whence had he come?

CASTRO

I have inquired in every quarter. There is none who knows.

Enter a soldier bringing OLALLA.

TEXEDA

Young woman, did you think so easily to avoid the vigilance of this court? So let me warn you ere you answer what we ask. Silence will not avail you, nor a lying tongue. What is the power this Battadios has on you that he can turn you from a life of shame?

OLALLA

Such power, my lord, as sometimes it would seem to me the Christ did have on Mary Magdalene. 'Twas by the nobleness of all he taught me I did put away my shame. You cannot turn those words of mine to heresy in him who never uttered but the truest thoughts a man has breath to speak with.

TEXEDA

Would you persuade this court such words, intense with heresy, frothed but in idleness upon your lips?

OLALLA

I do so swear it.

TEXEDA

And they were given you by none?

OLALLA

By none!

[TEXEDA *turns and consults in an undertone with* FERERA, *who advises him.* TEXEDA *inclines his head in agreement.*

Enter a soldier of the Inquisition who speaks to the USHER, *who crosses to* TEXEDA.

USHER

Sir, there is without a witness who has such evidence, he says, as this court could well afford to hear.

TEXEDA

Which means he needs his price. What is his name?

USHER

Lazzaro Zapportas, a merchant of this city, trading in silk stuffs and the like.

TEXEDA

Let him come here.

[*Exit* USHER.

TEXEDA

(*Having consulted again with* FERERA.) Take this young woman away, but keep her close. We may have need of her.

[*A soldier leads* OLALLA *away and* LAZZARO ZAPPORTAS is brought in.

FERERA

Lazzaro Zapportas.

ZAPPORTAS

Sir.

FERERA

Of your free will you have come here to give the court such information as you truly do possess of this Matteos Battadios.

ZAPPORTAS

I have such knowledge of the man, sir, as the Inquisition could well afford to hear.

TEXEDA

If his informing be of serious import, see that he is rewarded when he goes.

ZAPPORTAS

(*Bowing gratefully.*) I know you will reward me well when you have heard.

FERERA

How long has this Battadios been known to you ?

ZAPPORTAS

Since yesterday. My son had some slight sickness and we brought him to the house.

TEXEDA

What knowledge of the man can you have gained in such short time as that ?

ZAPPORTAS

Enough, sir, to explain this charge of heresy which has been raised against him.

TEXEDA

Come, speak it then, and let it be the truth.

ZAPPORTAS

It *is* the truth, but I must first demand he be not told who gave this knowledge that I bring.

FERERA

Demand !

TEXEDA

None but the Emperor can demand. This court does not consent to bind itself.

ZAPPORTAS

Then, sirs, my lips are sealed.

TEXEDA

Doubtless you think so, but we have means here to unloose them. Take him to the torture. He'll not be silent long.

ZAPPORTAS

(*Consumed with fear.*) Not torture, sirs! My body is too weak. If I should die, how would my knowledge serve you then?

TEXEDA

We'll look well to your health. (*To the soldiers.*) Take him away.

ZAPPORTAS

(*As the soldiers take him away.*) Then I will speak now, for I could not bear the pain.

TEXEDA

Unless you speak the truth it will not serve you.

ZAPPORTAS

As God hears me I do speak the truth. Matteos Battadios is a Jew.

TEXEDA

A Jew!

CASTRO

You have such knowledge in a day which none have known since he came to Seville?

ZAPPORTAS

With his own lips he told me so.

CASTRO

If this be true, 'tis in itself a very proof he spoke the words. He would convert this foolish woman to his faith. Here is enough to send him to the stake and not incur the anger of the people.

TEXEDA

Let him be brought here now, and keep this man at hand. If need be, we will bring them face to face. Take him away and bring this Battadios.

[*One soldier exits—the other takes* ZAPPORTAS *by the arm.*

ZAPPORTAS

(*As he is being led away.*) And the reward you promised, sir?

TEXEDA

Have no fear of that. When it is earned your payment shall be fully made.

ZAPPORTAS

I do not wish him ill, but thought such knowledge might well serve the court. I have said all I know. I've nothing to declare against the man. Can I not take my payment now and go?

CASTRO

(*To* TEXEDA.) There is a fear behind his heart, if he possesses one, to meet this doctor face to face.

TEXEDA

(*To* ZAPPORTAS.) What is your haste?

ZAPPORTAS

I would be gone about my business, sir.

TEXEDA

Take him away; I have no patience with his eagerness.

[*Exit soldier roughly with* ZAPPORTAS.

FERERA

If this be true we have an easier matter now to judge.

CASTRO

When once the people know this Battadios is a Jew, justice, even if it be the stake, will not offend them.

TEXEDA

Still better if such a man, so well-beloved in all Seville, would take the faith and bring great honour to the Church.

CASTRO

(*As the door opens.*) Here comes he now.

Enter MATTEOS BATTADIOS.

TEXEDA

(*Watching him.*) There's something fearless in the man. He bears himself with courage.

FERERA

He faces but the instruments of death. How will his spirit muster before death itself? (*As* MATTEOS *stands in his place.*) You are Matteos Battadios?

MATTEOS

I am.

FERERA

And are a doctor in Seville?

MATTEOS

I am.

FERERA

The charge against you is of heresy. What have you to say?

MATTEOS

I have no word to say.

TEXEDA

Do you deny all authorship of these vile words which on her own admission this young woman has

uttered in heresy against the Church? (*He pauses for an answer.*) 'It would go hard with Christ to know His own if He should come again?' (*Pause.*) I would advise you, sir, answer the court if justice is to be the measure of your guilt.

MATTEOS

I have no word to say.

TEXEDA

(*Conferring with* FERERA.) We can do nothing if he keep this silence close to guard him.

FISCAL

Send for the little man and so confront him now. If he's no Jew he'll speak to that. Once break reserve and then we'll trick him into words.

TEXEDA

(*To Usher.*) Bring in the witness we heard last.

[*Exit Usher.*

TEXEDA

(*To* MATTEOS.) We have one here who may incline you, sir, to loose your tongue, and instruments there are as well within these walls that have been known to make the very dumb cry out with unsuspected speech. I warn you now, these measures do you harm.

[MATTEOS *bows his head, then looks up as the soldier leads in* ZAPPORTAS *again to his place.*

MATTEOS

(*Regarding him quietly.*) Is this your witness?

ZAPPORTAS

(*In terror.*) Good sirs, I pray you heed not what this man shall say. He has no love of me.

MATTEOS

What have you said, Lazzaro?

FERERA

The witness has declared upon his oath you are, by blood and birth, a Jew.

TEXEDA

(*After a pause.*) Is that the truth?

MATTEOS

I am a wandering member of a wandering race.

TEXEDA

Answer the court! Are you a Jew?

MATTEOS

Do you mistrust his word?

TEXEDA

This is no question of his word, but yours. Are you a Jew?

MATTEOS

I am.

TEXEDA

(*Amazed.*) You do confess it!

MATTEOS

There is no power could wring denial from my lips.

TEXEDA

But what if it mean—death?

ZAPPORTAS

Death!

MATTEOS

That is a great meaning, sir.

TEXEDA

Yet if from this it can be proved you taught this heresy, it then may mean no less.

MATTEOS

You know as well as I it can prove nothing if my deeds are not a menace to the people of Seville.

TEXEDA

How comes it then you have concealed the fact so long and now divulge it to the witness here?

ZAPPORTAS

Ask not that question, sir. He has a spite against me and will in vengeance wreak it if he can.

MATTEOS

Lazzaro, I have no vengeance in my heart.

ZAPPORTAS

No vengeance!

MATTEOS

'Tis not the soul of every man is greater than his moment when it comes.

TEXEDA

Our question waits an answer, sir. (MATTEOS *does not reply.*) Do you defy authority?

MATTEOS

This man is not upon his trial. There is no heresy in him. He has but spoken what he thought would aid the court.

TEXEDA

You speak as it were generous, sir, but here is one who sells his information, and shall give his proper weight.

MATTEOS

(*Looking without anger at* LAZZARO.) It was not worth a price, Lazzaro. You even would have found more ease of heart if you had given it away.

ZAPPORTAS

(*Trying to face his glance, then dropping his eyes and turning to* TEXEDA *with a note of bitter self-recrimination in his voice.*) May I not go now? I have no more to say.

TEXEDA

No more? (*He consults with* FERERA.) You can but say that this man is a Jew. And what's your price for that?

ZAPPORTAS

(*Bitterly.*) I want no price. I care not what I get.

FERERA

(*Smiling shrewdly.*) This merchant is the first that I have known who cared not for his price because his goods were soiled.

ZAPPORTAS

(*His deeper conscience crying out of him despite himself.*) What have I done? I did but speak the truth, and yet it seems within my heart a lie had been of better service here. What have I done?

MATTEOS

You have but been a servant to your will, and in such servitude all must perform the menial things of fate. You've asked your price, Lazzaro—take it. You one day may be master of your soul.

TEXEDA

(*To the Usher.*) We waste the time of the court. Dole out his money and let him go.

[*The Usher beckons to* ZAPPORTAS *and counts out some money into his hand. He takes it as though each piece were burning metal in his hand. With his head bowed in shame he turns to the door. At the door he looks back, as though he knew it were the last time he would see him.*

Exit ZAPPORTAS.

TEXEDA

(*To* FERERA.) We get no further. What if he is a Jew? As he has said, his deeds are clean. The people would not suffer him to die, and it is plain to me the torture will not break the iron of his will.

FERERA

Send for the girl. I have a torture that will give him pain. We'll make him wince and bend the iron till it snaps.

(*They consult.*)

TEXEDA

(*To the Usher.*) Bring in the young woman again.

[*While the Usher is gone,* FERERA *and* CASTRO *consult in undertones with* TEXEDA, *who listens in agreement to all they say, evidently approving of their advice.*

Enter OLALLA *with a soldier. As she sees* MATTEOS, *her eyes turn to him in suffering.*

TEXEDA

(*As she stands before him.*) Closely we have questioned this man and can extract no answer to our charge. It was no more than supposition of the court that with the power he had to influence you these words of heresy you do admit had come in thought and being from his mind. We cannot prove that this is so, therefore in all untainted justice we shall set him free.

[OLALLA *clasps her hands in the emotion of her joy and gratitude.* TEXEDA *continues after a pause.*

But thus it is this court cannot accept your plea of idle words upon a thoughtless tongue. Too deeply meant this heresy appears to us, and so our sentence is that you shall die, and God in mercy cleanse your soul of it.

[OLALLA *sways as she stands. The soldier supports her.*

OLALLA

(*Standing a moment unsteadily, staring at them, unable to realise the meaning of it.*) What have *I* done? (*With sudden realisation of the sentence she stumbles to the table at which the Council are sitting and, kneeling down, implores* TEXEDA *for mercy.* FERERA *closely watches* MATTEOS.) My lord! My lord! I cannot die! I am not clean enough to die. I am afraid to die. Oh, let me live a little longer yet!

MATTEOS

Olalla.

OLALLA

Master! I cannot hold my fear! It all seems closing black around me. Their hands will hurt. I cannot go to Death! It frightens me. (*Her voice rises to a pitch of hysteria.*) Speak for me, Master! Speak!

FERERA

(*Sharply questioning her and pursuing the advantage of her fear.*) Why do you cry to him for help? How can he succour you?

OLALLA

He knows my heart is full of fear.

FERERA

How would that help you now?

OLALLA

I do not know.

FERERA

'Twere better that you did! The torture will not comfort you so well as Death.

OLALLA

I do not know!

FERERA

You called him 'Master'! What is it makes him that to you?

OLALLA

He has been that and more to me. 'Twas he that taught me—— (*She stops, seeing how her fear is betraying her.*)

FERERA

Go on—go on! He taught you what?

OLALLA

I do not mean——!

FERERA

He taught you what?

OLALLA

Oh God! What shall I say! You do increase my fear!

MATTEOS

Hold fast your heart, Olalla. He cannot touch you there.

FERERA

Be silent! When we have need of speech from you we'll ask of it. (*He turns to* OLALLA.) The court has given sentence. Only your tongue can save you.

OLALLA

(*Her voice rising to hysteria.*) Speak for me, Master! Speak!

FERERA

Speak what? What shall he speak?

OLALLA

(*Panting in her fear.*) Oh, do not ask me more. I have no strength to say.

FERERA

What shall he speak?

OLALLA

(*Clinging to the barrier.*) I—I cannot say. I—I—— (*She drops down.*)

FERERA

If you would ease your fear of death, tell now the court what he should speak.

OLALLA

God's mercy! That which I begged him keep in silence.

FERERA

Now tell us what was that?

OLALLA

(*Almost unconscious of what she is saying.*) The words were not first mine.

FERERA

But his! (*She is half sinking into a faint.*) Answer me! But his?

OLALLA

Oh, yes. Oh—— (*With a moan she falls in a faint on to the ground.*)

TEXEDA

Bear her away and keep close charge of her.

[*Two soldiers lift* OLALLA *up, whose moans and weeping can be heard as they carry her out.*

[*Exit* OLALLA.

TEXEDA

Now, sir, do you deny our charge?

MATTEOS

There's naught I have denied. All that has passed has been the purpose and the will of God.

TEXEDA

This then is heresy, imputing all abomination to the Mother Church. Unless you can explain these words, and to the satisfaction of the court, of heresy you then will stand accused.

CASTRO

There doubtless is some simple explanation in his mind. Never has been the spirit of the Church so high exalted as it is to-day.

TEXEDA

So in this high estate to which the Church has come, it might indeed go hard with Christ—(*he crosses himself*)—to recognise His own from what they were.

MATTEOS

If I had need of loophole for escape you would deserve my thanks for that. But this was not my meaning, sir. I've watched the growth of Christianity from the seed of life from which it sprang, and as each age some new conceit of man has cunningly been grafted on its stem, so has it long outgrown all likeness to the tree it was.

FERERA

Must we listen to the arrogance of this profanity ?

TEXEDA

Let him speak on. (*He listens intently.*)

MATTEOS

Humbly I bid you ask yourselves, will Christianity make its Christ, or in the end will Christ make all men Christians?

If these in our Seville, or you in high authority, belong to Christ, by what sign *should* He know you if He came again? By your pity? God defend us, for you have none! By your humility? I am not He to judge you for your pride. By your mercy? *Dare* you forgive, lest they you pardon should be given leave to find you out? By your love? Whom have you loved, good sirs, unless it were the little being of yourselves?

CASTRO

This is reviling on the Church itself.

TEXEDA

Still let him speak.

MATTEOS

And yet perchance I wrong you when I say there is no sign by which Christ now would know His own. (*He points to the crucifix hanging behind them above their heads.*) There is the sign His eyes would turn to with familiar gaze. That you have kept! His Cross! But in its polished surfaces—its gold and silver and its precious stones—the pain He bore on it is all heaped out with pride.

(*Leaning forward and pointing with his finger at the crucifix.*) 'Twas not a cross like that He carried up the hill to Calvary. Rough beams of sycamine it was

that never knew the temper of the plane. The bark was crusted round the stem. It had been roughly hewn the day before, and on one arm whereon they nailed His hand a little twig clung to the mother tree and shook its leaves in lingering life as His limbs trembled with the touch of death.

That was the only jewel on His cross, and they who mocked Him then with words—who mocked—(*he bends his head*)—and spat on Him—was that such mockery as yours, whose hollow worship in a painted shrine is more unreal than spittle on your lips ?

TEXEDA

(*To his Councillors.*) This is the vilest blasphemy. (*To* MATTEOS.) Have you lost all regard, that here you stand before the highest court, and for such words as these your eyes might never see the light of day again !

MATTEOS

It is the fault of all in this short life to dwell upon the consequences ere they act. So, many a good deed has been swallowed up in contemplation. I have outgrown timidity.

FIRST COUNCILLOR

Outgrown !

THIRD COUNCILLOR

He's watched the growth of Christianity !

FOURTH COUNCILLOR

What age is he ?

TEXEDA

What age are you? (*Pause.*) Answer the court!

MATTEOS

If I should say the court would not believe. I do assure you, sirs, before I leave this place, I shall have taxed your credulity enough.

TEXEDA

A moment past I spoke of death as it might be the sentence of the Inquisition on your heresy. Yet even here the court is merciful.

MATTEOS

What must I give, sir, in exchange for mercy?

TEXEDA

Embrace here now the faith of Holy Mother Church, and on the morrow in the market-place, before all people there assembled, declare you were a Jew on whom the light of this our Christian faith has fallen.

MATTEOS

Think you that that will bring me face to face with Christ?

CASTRO

(*Whispering.*) He does consider it.

TEXEDA

It does bring all to Christ.

MATTEOS

Not words, sir. They do but touch the tongue. What in default of this?

TEXEDA

In that same market-place you shall be burnt to death.

MATTEOS

Is this—the hour of death—the only threat you can hold forth?

TEXEDA

It is enough for many men I know. Life is a sweet thing, Battadios.

MATTEOS

(*Striking his breast.*) This is not life, good sir, this little body balanced on a spinning world. 'Tis but the glance we have of life, which is eternal; and death, could we but seize of it like men, is life's most glorious opportunity.

You do not know—how can you tell, who in your three-score years and ten come like a mote upon a stream of light and eddy in the sunshine and are gone! 'Tis this existence in the slanting beam that seems the sweetest opportunity to you. You seize and hold it with your clutching hands, afraid to let it go, afraid to pass into the darkness that lies there beyond. For all your talk of life eternal in the Kingdom of your God, 'tis this brief span of years alone your heart has

certain knowledge of. This is the hour you cherish when in your sense of hearing, touch, and sight, you can be proudly sure that you—are you.

How should you know that I speak true? A hundred years and even you might shudder at the thought of life till then. But if a thousand years and more you had stood in a crowded world and watched the pageant of your little hopes and petty fears pass by—and still pass by—and still—and still! Would you not gaze towards death with such a hunger in your eyes as even God might have some pity for?

Your sentence is of death, good sirs. God grant you have the power to bring it to effect.

FERERA

I have but little patience left to listen to his madness.

TEXEDA

Here is the last time I will speak the mercy of the court. Will you accept the Holy Sacrament of the Church in Bread and Wine?

MATTEOS

The spirit of your Christ is nearer to my heart as I stand here—a Jew—than ever it could be to those who would so thrust Him 'tween their lips.

FERERA

We'll hear no more! Out of his own mouth he does condemn himself of vilest heresy.

TEXEDA

(*Turning to the others.*) Is this the judgment of the court?

COUNCILLORS

(*Together.*) It is.

TEXEDA

So be it as the court decides. (*He turns to* MATTEOS.) Matteos Battadios, you say you long for death. My brothers here award it you. It waits you in the market-place with to-morrow's morn. Take him away.

[*The soldiers lead* MATTEOS *swiftly out.* TEXEDA *rises, the Councillors with him. The curtain falls as they troop out.*

CURTAIN

SCENE III

Scene

This is the square of the market-place in Seville. The stake is in readiness for the auto-da-fé. About the square can be seen the houses of the city. At S.L. a platform has been erected from which the sentence is to be read and on which the officers of the Inquisition will stand.

As curtain rises a mob of people is being kept back from the stake by the soldiers. Beside the stake are piles of faggots lying on the cobbled stones.

The crowd are murmuring excitedly amongst themselves, their voices dropping as the bellman of the city comes out from a street at S.R. He is followed by the Crier. *The bellman rings his bell.*

THE CRIER

(*Reading from a document in his hand.*) Know all dwellers in this city that the Holy Office of the Inquisition for the glory and honour of God and the exaltation of our Holy Faith, will this day celebrate a public trial by faith upon the person of Matteos Battadios, a Jew of this city.

[*There is a moment's hush, then the voices begin again as* Olalla *pushes her way into the front at S.L. As she sees the stake she hides her face in her hands. The voices die away once more as the procession approaches from the same direction as the* Crier. *First comes a priest bearing a white cross, then another bearing a green*

cross. Then follows the sentence in a scarlet velvet box, carried in front of FERERA, *the Fiscal, in his robes of office. The voices of the crowd die away to absolute silence as a third priest enters, carrying a cross shrouded in black, followed by an acolyte tolling a bell. Immediately behind these walks* BATTADIOS *in his robe of yellow with a red cross on his back and chest. He takes his place below the platform.*

FERERA

(*From the platform.*) Matteos Battadios, before the court of the Inquisition you have declared you are a Jew. Do you still so declare yourself before these here?

MATTEOS

I do.

(*The crowd murmurs.*)

FERERA

And by the court you have been charged and proved in blasphemy against the Holy Church. Hear then all people the judgment and the sentence of the Holy Inquisition on this man. (*The box is presented to him. He takes out the sentence and reads.*) The court decrees that at this stake and in the eyes of all men you shall be burnt to death, and may Almighty God have mercy on your soul. (*As he crosses himself.*) In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

[*With a cry* OLALLA *breaks her way through the soldiers and throws herself on her knees at*

BATTADIOS' *feet. A soldier comes forward to take her away.* FERERA *holds up his hand to stop him. He stands over her.*

OLALLA

Master! Master! 'Twas I who brought you this.

MATTEOS

Child, you may have brought the great deliverance. Before the next few moments have gone by I shall have learnt the truth.

OLALLA

What truth, Master?

MATTEOS

That which we all must learn and I have been awaiting for so long. (*He raises her to her feet. She turns weeping away.*) Sirs, begin your work.

[*The soldier leads* OLALLA *away. Another soldier takes* MATTEOS *to the stake, binding him there with ropes. The faggots are piled around him. Two soldiers bring torches to light the faggots. They will not light. The crowd murmurs.*

A VOICE

The faggots will not light.

ANOTHER VOICE

He was a good man. Did he not heal my son? Death was not meant for him.

MATTEOS

(*Looking towards heaven.*) Oh God, is my release not yet?

[*As he lifts his face a bright light falls on it. He meets it with hope and fulfilment in his eyes.*

A MAN IN THE CROWD BESIDE OLALLA

Look! Look! What light is that?

OLALLA

It is the light of Christ come out to meet this noble man.

[*At this moment the faggots catch. The smoke begins to rise, then flames.* MATTEOS' *garment can be seen to get slowly black. His head is still thrown back, meeting the light as the flames leap up against him. At last, when all his garment is charred and the skin of his face discoloured the light dies out, and his head falls forward on his chest.* OLALLA *drops with a moan to the ground and then the bellman rings his bell.*

THE CRIER

Matteos Battadios, the Jew, is dead.

CURTAIN

THE END.

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